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INSIGHT AND PERSONALITY ADJUSTMENT

'A Study of the Psychological Effects of War

By

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PREFACE

Sudden changes in the social scene, upheavals such as are wrought by economic depression, by revolutions and by wars, lay bare for our observation the interaction between the individual and society; they expose sharply the individual and his relationship to his primary social unit: the family. The war, with the shocklike interruption of the usual tempo of living, wrote a new, clearly defined chapter in the life of the individual as well as of the nation. And the family bears the brunt of the upheaval. Sociologists as well as psychiatrists look upon the family with concern. Will the family—this proven institution of many tasks—be able to carry on and continue to conserve our cultural inheritance, conveying it to a new, rebellious generation? Will it be able, at the same time, to keep step with the progress which our complex society impatiently forces upon its traditions?

Impressed by the impact of the war upon the population, the psychiatrist had endless opportunities to study and interpret its effects upon human relationships. For the war exposed the images, illusions, expectations and disappointments which each of us harbors as indelible impressions of living together. Thus conflicts which already might have receded into inactivity during the routine of peacetime living were stirred into consciousness and demanded attention.

Although this volume deals with many problems of living in wartime it is not a "war book." The war is its background. It reflects the expectations and apprehensions, the elations and discouragements as "people" experience war. Yet this book is not a conglomerate of individual case histories during wartime. It is rather a presentation of the basic dynamism of human relationships according to which *the family*—a living, changing, but enduring organism, functions. "Insight" into the intricate

motivations of interpersonal relations reveals the processes which occur unconsciously and lead normally to satisfactory "adjustment." We rarely gain insight by observing the "normal" processes; they occur smoothly and unobtrusively. We rather learn from the cruder examples of the failures of adjustment by which our insight is immediately tested. Such understanding is our tool in helping people to achieve adjustment through therapy.



This book is written mainly for those whose professional task it is to assist individuals to achieve emotional adjustment. It is designed particularly for social-workers, psychologists, counsellors and teachers. Physicians in the general field of medicine as well as psychiatrists will find it useful, for its therapeutic orientation is based not on the individual alone, but on the family as a whole.



It is impossible for me to express my appreciation to all those to whom I feel indebted and grateful: such a statement would become an autobiography. To the readers it will be obvious that my thinking and insight have been shaped by the practice and study of psychoanalysis. More specifically related to this book is my indebtedness to those who deliberately or without their knowledge participated in this work: my patients and my students. Especially I want to express my thanks to the United Charities for their significant case material and discussion, to my colleagues of the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis for their encouragement, interest, advice and cooperation and last but not least to Dr. Eva R. Balken and Dr. Louis L. Heyn for their careful editing of the manuscript.

THERESE BENEDEK

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INSIGHT AND
PERSONALITY ADJUSTMENT

INTRODUCTION

It is a truism to state that the attitudes toward war, and toward the Army, as well as toward the individual soldier differ from nation to nation. In an intricate way these attitudes develop and become the characteristically distinctive philosophy of a nation. The relationship between the civilian community and its soldiers is—in every nation—the expression of the role that *War* and the *Army*, as institutions, play in the tradition of a nation. This study is devoted to the American scene.

“America is a peace-loving nation.” This is our philosophy, our way of living. Its sociodynamic causes are deeply rooted in the country’s emotional life and its effects branch out far and wide. A peace-loving nation feels that war is alien to its nature; it denies it as a possibility and, even if reason demonstrates its necessity, the nation defends itself against its probability for as long as it feasibly can. Just as the death of a beloved person, though anticipated during his long illness, still comes unexpectedly, so the bombing which changed the nation’s reality from peace to war, could be experienced only as a shock. There was the immediate response: anger and the impulsive, virile urgency to answer the insult. The unifying effect of this reaction was obvious: it changed a peace-loving people into a warring nation. This anger and the impatience “to get on with the war” mobilized the active energies of the country for purposeful action. Unconsciously, however, the emotional mobilization of the nation to war was a slow process. The universal law of psychic inertia activated the desire to conserve what one loved and what one had—the unconscious determination to defend one’s self against change.

Thus the American soldier was drafted into the Army with little fanfare and with no special tributes. The Army was as strange to him as it was alien to those whom he had left behind.

He was compelled to change while the civilian could deny—at least, consciously—the necessity for emotional adaptation to the exigencies of war. There was a long period throughout which it seemed that, as Franklin P. Adams remarked in 1917, “there would be two kinds of people after the war, those who were in it, and those who were not.” The gap between civilian and soldier appeared wide and it affected the soldier profoundly. He sensed that he was expected to return unchanged, to take his place again in a society which itself had refused to change, and this reinforced the soldier’s unconscious and conscious desire to remain as he was—a civilian.

So throughout his service in the Army, the American soldier had two sets of values and two sets of insecurities; the one intrinsic in his Army life, the other belonging to his civilian past and future. While exposed to the rigorous training and hardships of soldiering, he felt compelled to plan and prepare for his civilian future: he thus carried double responsibility. This was probably the main reason for his reluctance to accept slogans, for his defensiveness against indoctrination; to him the war had one and only one justification—the immediate necessity—and he was fighting to speed its certain outcome. He needed no other ideology than his deeply rooted desire to come back.

For this was a sloganless war, and in this respect civilians acted in the same way, even if not so reluctantly as the soldier. Early in the war, when it was felt that this war should have a name which would both express the gravity of the situation and stimulate the fighting spirit, America refused. We would not call it “the war for survival” since this expressed the danger too directly; tentatively we accepted “global-war”—rather more as a geographic description than as an indication of the inevitably massive scope of the war. So it became *THE SECOND WORLD WAR* or just simply, in the style of *Time* magazine, *World War II*—coming after *World War I* and even allowing for a *World War III*.

World War II was the job in hand. It was a staggering job, a job for a giant. The giant rolled up his sleeves and set himself to the task. The concentration upon his purpose did not

allow pessimism and fear to enter his mind; nor did it permit idealization of his job. Not that there were no ideals. There were many, probably too high to comprehend and to fulfil. There was the solemn pledge of The Atlantic Charter promising that the hope of mankind would be fulfilled. This was the ideological goal of World War II; yet actually it was never translated into slogans nor specifically defined in the consciousness of the individual. For the giant was not naive. Warned by his disappointment in the period following the first World War, he was skeptical of human wisdom and feared nothing more than disappointment—to be lured into hoping and believing only to be betrayed later by the reality.

Bent upon the immediate necessity, America—and every American soldier—went to war. And while the soldier was intent upon remaining a civilian, he became a fighting man, a part of the fighting machine, a cog in the mechanized war. The standardization of Army life was for him, however, only a superficial veneer; he desired to shed it with his uniform. This was not his fault, nor his virtue. Democracy wanted it that way. This does not mean that Democracy makes soldiering easy—just the opposite.

American democracy has no super-individual *will of state*; it does not surround its leaders with myths and mysticism; it attaches no fanaticism to its goals and has no tradition which elevates the soldier's "kinship in the Army" above the status of the civilian. He has only his country—where its leaders can be criticized, their purposes and motives questioned, their methods and efforts found to be too much by some and too little by others. This—his highest value—his political freedom, which he is fighting to preserve, is an added unique responsibility of the American soldier. His task was not alleviated by a traditional ideology of the Army which held forth promises of glory even before he had done his job, even before he had succeeded. The American mind did not make anything as clear—and this was utterly different from the ideologies of its enemies—as the fact that it did not want the soldiers to be supermen. Yes—he shall have superior machines and he shall be a part of a superior Army, and he shall win the greatest war—all this in the due

course of time. But he himself, regardless of the present demands on him, shall remain an *individual—the person determined by his particular past*. Democracy wants it so.

Democracy is based on the humanistic ideal of the individual and his dignity, of his right to choose and pursue his own happiness. The war waged for the democratic way of living was fought fundamentally for the continuation of this ideal. While the soldier is fighting to secure this goal, democracy deprives him of the psychological convenience of mass ideologies. Democracy places a greater responsibility upon the individual soldier than do other political philosophies. And this burden, his ideological responsibility, is not lessened when the soldier returns, when he becomes a civilian—an individual—again. Just the opposite. After victory is won, society which was reluctant to change wants to return quickly to its pre-war ideology. The job done, the Army appears superfluous, the glory belongs to the past. Society demands that the veteran adapt quickly, that he find his place which is not prepared nor given to him; demands that the veteran immediately maintain himself as an individual in a competitive society,—and that he assume his role unchanged in his changing family.

Democracy indeed is the most ambitious, exacting stimulus to human development, to maturation and to independence. Millions—all mankind—benefit thereby, yet some individuals may break under its burdens and many may need help in achieving its goal.

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PART I

THE INDIVIDUAL

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This part outlines the psychoanalytic concept of the development of the individual from infancy to maturation and is followed by a discussion of the dynamics of interpersonal relationship within marriage. This presentation, while necessarily incomplete, may suffice to demonstrate the underlying thesis of this volume: that every experience shapes the psychological conditions for future experiences; that the present cannot be understood without an evaluation of the influence of the past.

Such a condensation of fundamental concepts may appear cumbersome. Yet this is necessary for the understanding of the emotional processes by which human personality can gradually emerge from its infant dependency to become an adult individual of self-determination and conscience, as our culture requires him to be. Since the development of the individual is determined by the family, the study of the individual necessarily reflects the emotional structure of the family.

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Chapter 1

THE DEVELOPMENT TO LOVE

Love is a categorical imperative of humanity. "Love thy neighbor as thyself" is the command which follows men from nursery to the grave. Today, at the close of the most destructive war which mankind ever inflicted upon itself; today, when suspicion and fear of the next war seem to drain the joy over the end of this war, we know that the road which one must travel in the attainment of love is often blind and blundering, that even well-acquired love must be defended. For love is the goal of human nature. And, individually as well as within a nation and among nations, it can be attained only by a complex process of maturation.

In the individual, this process is a result of the continuous, dynamic interaction of instinctual forces. Freud, with his deep insight into human nature, conceived of love as a manifestation of a tendency striving for integration and unity. This tendency is, or may be, at any time within the life of the individual, opposed by another tendency of the same or even stronger intensity, the goal of which is destruction. Over and beyond these tendencies is the instinct of self-preservation. The fate of this instinct determines which tendency will come to the fore—that which is striving for love or that which is striving for destruction. If the individual is not safe and secure—and this can be observed among nations as well—he is prompted by the instinct for self-preservation to reach out for means of self-assertion which will enable him to attain a state of security. But if the individual is safe and secure—this, too, can be observed among nations, albeit in a far-away and muted fashion—then love will be in the ascendancy. Its attainment and maintenance are, thus, only secondary to the goal of survival, of self-preservation. We shall concentrate here only upon the psychodynamic processes where-

by the individual learns how to attain the universal categorical imperative. love.

In the beginning the total energy of the new-born is biological, it is concentrated on growth. Hunger—the sensation which expresses its need for the material out of which his body is built and without which he cannot survive—activates all his motoric energy. Crying and wiggling, scratching and tearing are manifestations of such energy. To summon the mother the infant uses the same muscular energy which he will use later to assert himself in games and sports, in work, in all purposeful activities.

When the new-born cries for food, this self-assertion is in the interest of survival. He will cry until gratification arrives or until he has exhausted his motoric energy. If the hunger is satisfied in such a way that the infant does not have to use up all his energies, there is a positive balance in his energy household; he then has a surplus for physical and mental growth. With this surplus energy the infant tries to continue the pleasurable feeling in his mouth as well as the sensuous, pleasant bodily sensations of being held, cuddled and soothed in the arms of his mother. This biologically performed pattern of behavior gains momentum for its development in the mother's tenderness, and will return later to express and satisfy the need for love—to model the expressions of loving and being loved—throughout life.

When the infant's well being is disturbed by disagreeable stimuli his motoric impulses are activated again. He cries to signal his need and to defend himself by summoning help. Soon, however, the first signs of growth will be recognizable. The three- to four-months-old infant recognizes the mother as the source of gratification and also shows some intentions for mastery. He begins to grasp the objects of gratification, for example, the bottle. If he is somewhat older he will reach out for an object which attracts his interest. If the object is put out of his reach the baby will begin to muster and concentrate all his power to reach it. This goal-directed movement may be clumsy and hesitating at first, but in a relatively short time, if the baby

is healthy, it will function as if the necessary coordination had been ready all the time.

If the infant is at an age where he has already become aware that there are other individuals than the mother in his orbit, he will watch out for whatever and whomever may interfere with the fulfilment of his immediate desire. A baby, already in the second half of his first year, notices with resentment whenever an older sibling takes a toy out of his reach, and his facial expression will show the surprise and the "can this be happening to me?" feeling. Then he will cry; in this way he calls for the mother who usually takes the toy away from the brother and gives it to the infant. While this is happening his attention is—interestingly enough—not directed toward the toy; rather, his eyes follow the mother as if he would not let any intimation of her attitude escape him. The mother may calmly take the toy away from the brother and give it to the infant, who thus gains reassurance from her in his self-assertion. Thus, unfrightened and assured again of her love, the baby is free to exercise his surplus energies in the attainment of other goals and pleasures.

It is difficult to describe how the infant gains this reassurance merely from the mother's expression, from her smile and her pat. Yet it is markedly different from what the infant's expression would have been if the mother's attitude were different. If she had restored the toy with an expression of anger and impatience, the infant's self-assertion would have been successful; but there would have been little pleasure and no reassurance of the mother's love in the achievement and one can easily recognize this in the baby's expression. And if the mother goes even further, if in her anger she punishes the other child, the infant learns that his mother can be dangerous, and, in his fear of her, he will not know who "made the mistake"—the brother who took his toy or he who brought on the mother's anger. For in the fear of the mother, he may identify himself with the brother: "She who did this to him, can do it to me as well," and the next time he will think twice before calling upon the mother, since his fear interferes with his trust. Henceforth, abandoned to himself for self-assertion, he will become more angry with his brother whenever a similar occasion arises.

All this is but a crude example of the beginnings of the child's response to the world around him, and in its simplicity it expresses the two primary factors active in the educational process: the one is the fear of punishment, the other the gratefulness for satisfaction. The manifestation of a rudimentary gratitude, the willingness to be good, to be loving, to smile at the mother is in itself a short-cut to security. The child needs such quick reassurance of the mother's love often, since while he is *learning to love* the mother he is also experiencing insecurities which lead him to *fear* her.

At any level of development if the gratification of the dependent needs is interrupted, the security and safety of the individual is threatened—the motoric manifestations of self-preservation become alarmed for defense. Fear is the emotional signal which responds to the quality and quantity of the danger, and indicates that ways must be found to reestablish security. Flight is one of the basic methods indicated by nature itself; the other is self-assertion with its great varieties of expression. Thus, both the receptive-dependent needs and the self-assertive impulses seem to be manifestations of the same instinct—that for self-preservation. From this beginning these two main trends—the receptive-dependent tendencies and the self-assertive tendencies—become further differentiated and come to appear as antagonists in our emotional household.

Love is the emotional manifestation which grows out of the surplus excitation following satisfaction of the receptive needs.¹ Out of the gratification of the receptive needs develops the infant's—be it boy or girl—first emotional attitude, the confident expectation that the mother will satisfy all needs.² The mother is the child's first teacher and it cannot be too much emphasized that the process of learning is emotional. As our example has shown, the infant quickly finds out those activities for which the mother likes him and increases the expression of her love and thereby gratifies the infant's almost insatiable receptivity for

¹ Franz Alexander: "Psychoanalysis Revised," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, IX:1, 1940.

² Therese Benedek: "Adaptation to Reality in Early Infancy," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, VII:200, 1938.

love. The infant also soon realizes what are the actions which cause the mother to reduce or withdraw her love; what actions, in other words, bring the mother's punishment upon him. He will soon know that self-assertion and its emotional manifestations, hatred and hostility, if freely expressed bring about the disapproval of the parents, or of the stronger sibling or playmate. They teach the child from an early age to adapt his behavior to the willingness of others to comply with his needs.

The interplay between the two aspects of self-preservation which is expressed so frankly or even brutally in the nursery—as well as in society as a whole—slowly becomes disguised and indirect through adaptation to the environment. This adaptation—the psychic growth of the individual—is a complex process, resulting in the development of an inner psychic institution which Freud called the super-ego, its manifestation is the conscience. This inner psychic instrument which may become highly differentiated during the course of life represents the integration of both emotions—love and hatred, for it originates in both and its function is to control both of these emotions throughout life.

Thus far we have described only the relationship between mother and child—and its role in the development of conscience. Naturally there develops also the same sort of attitude between child and father, although this influence becomes marked only at a somewhat later age.

The primary learning depends upon the child's relationship to the mother. The emotional security which develops as a result of an undisturbed and basically loving attitude of the mother, is expressed differently in the behavior of boys and girls. It gives the boy permission for self-assertion and a sense of courage in using his growing muscular power; thus he may free himself from his dependence on the mother in order to start a development in which identification with the father becomes a leading motive. The girl's development takes a different course. The sense of security which the mother gives the daughter is the first and most effective impulse for identification with the mother; so she easily imitates her mother and learns from her.

One of the earliest observations of psychoanalysis is that the psychosexual development of every individual reaches its most

important juncture when, through the process of identification with the parent of the same sex, the child intensifies his or her loving, erotically colored demands toward the parent of the opposite sex. This developmental period—the child is then three to five years old—is called the *oedipal phase* since it is dominated by a conflict which is referred to as the *oedipal complex*.³ When the girl turns to her father for gratification, she comes into conflict with her mother, the source of gratification of her dependent needs. Thus, at the oedipal phase of the girl's development, we meet for the first time the conflicting tendencies of wanting to be the child and to be loved by the mother, and yet to be in her place and be loved by the father. The fear of doing wrong against the mother is the core of a sense of guilt, which if it becomes too strong may interfere with the further development of femininity, the girl's capacity to love. The boy's development appears to be simpler. He keeps his original object of love, the mother, but his relationship to her now includes the expression of another level of psychosexual growth. The boy appears sexually curious and in a childish way erotically aggressive toward her. Through identification with his father, did the boy develop to become his father's competitor. This competition with the father necessarily goes hand in hand with a fear of punishment. This fear, in the course of normal development, is strong enough to impel the repression of his oedipal desires and by this he internalizes the fear of his father. From that time on the father will watch, in the form of conscience, with stern eyes, the behavior of his son.

Psychoanalysts, especially Freud, have always maintained that the super-ego formation of the girl is more hesitant, less definite than that of the boy, and have related this to the observation that it takes a longer time for girls to reach the oedipal phase than it takes for boys.⁴ The girl will try to make peace with the mother by repressing her oedipal desire toward the father; the result of this process will be a super-ego, the core of

³ Sigmund Freud: "An Outline of Psycho-Analysis," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, XXI:65, 1940.

⁴ Sigmund Freud: *New Introductory Lectures*, Chapter 5, "The Psychology of Women," W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1933.

which is the mother. Needless to say, this is a simplification; children of both sexes gain their controlling influences from both parents and from all other individuals with whom they are in an emotionally effective relationship. We shall, however, emphasize that it is easier and more pleasant to live with a conscience which developed on the basis of gratitude, love and respect, than with one which developed out of fear of punishment. The latter may be so punitive as to inhibit any free expressions of emotional desire, and thus inhibits psychosexual growth.⁵



After the oedipal tendencies have been repressed and the prohibitions internalized, the *latency period* follows. During this period the erotic behavior recedes and the mental and social growth dominates the behavior. The ego, free from the disturbances caused by sexuality, may now concentrate upon expansion of previous gains. In our culture this generally coincides with the beginning of the school age (six years). The "normal" boy's father-identification will express itself in "masculinity"; that is, in object-directed interests and in frank but not too exaggerated self-assertion. Boys with a passive disposition and/or influenced by identification with a passive father, may develop a fear of their masculine role. These boys try to avoid dangers inherent in self-assertion. These are the "sissies." Or they may have an internal conflict about their passivity which forces them to deny their fear; such boys show an over-compensative self-assertion which often brings them into trouble. The girl's development is more complex. Little girls often expose a deeply ingrained fear of their future sexual role. Hence, before they reach the level in which they can express the identification with the mother, they show definite attempts to avoid this identification or to delay it. Some girls consequently increase their dependence on the mother, thus expressing the desire to remain the child—this is their unconsciously chosen defense against femininity. Others have another way—their aggressive, tomboyish behavior indicates their flight from femininity. These two main

⁵ Sigmund Freud: "The Passing of the Oedipus Complex," *Collected Papers*, II:269, 1924.

groups of character formation can be considered as normal variations in feminine development.

The main issue is that, if the personality development is normal, the psychodynamic tendencies which constituted the oedipus complex become absorbed in the total personality. These erotic components repressed, sexuality does not exist for the children in the latency period. However, if this process of repression and resolution does not succeed, the residual components keep the child's sexual curiosity awake, causing sexual preoccupation. In these instances we cannot speak about "latency." The sexuality which disturbingly survives the oedipal phase represents the remnants of the infantile eroticism (*pre-genital sexuality*⁶) which, continued through the latency period and adolescence into adulthood, interferes with the integration of the psychosexual personality.



The latency period slowly gives way under the influences of physiological growth. The age of physiological maturation—*puberty*—varies with many factors; constitution, race, climatic conditions, as well as environmental influences within the family and the general cultural milieu have their accelerating and retarding effects. The early signs of physiological maturation are noticeable in many instances, already at the age of nine, but generally the physiological changes of *prepuberty* take place gradually between the ages of ten and fourteen. From prepuberty to complete physiological maturation—puberty—boys and girls experience a trying emotional process. *Adolescence* is the term which refers largely to the psychological aspects of psychosexual growth which does not coincide with and usually outlasts the physiological maturation.

In primitive societies where rites—probably painful and threatening—are held, society takes charge of and responsibility for the individual's sexual activity; the adolescents in such societies do not need to overcome so many internal obstacles as in a society where the individual is himself responsible for his sexual

⁶ Sigmund Freud: "The Infantile Genital Organization of the Libido," *Collected Papers*: II 244, 1924.

activities and for the choice of his love object. In our society the process of adolescent maturation is long and it may take years, since it may be often interrupted by remissions of the psychosexual growth. The acceleration or retardation of adolescent growth, as well as its emotional content, is determined by the previous psychosexual development. This represents the evolution of an innate *anlage* under the influence of the environment. The environment itself is again the result of an intricate interplay of culture and its effects on those persons who represent the immediate environment of the child. As already indicated, in our society the individual's responsibility for sexuality is not relieved by collective action of the society at puberty. In this crucial age, boys and girls have to work out their individuality more or less unaided.

With the developing hormonal function, heterosexuality becomes an emotional reality. Left to themselves, to their conscience, boys and girls respond with an emotional defense against the inner awareness of their heterosexual desire which appears, at first, as alien and dangerous. The heterosexual aspect of sexuality, however, represents only one group of the emotional manifestations of puberty. The growing sexual function produces hormones which flood the body with libidinous feelings; girls as well as boys can only rarely enjoy this without shyness and embarrassment. Thus it is observed that just when the adolescent should have the courage to seek heterosexual companionship, or should permit the approval of the other sex, he shyly withdraws, since he does not feel secure, he does not feel lovable. This produces an increasing emotional tension which, without adequate relief, causes a state of internal dissatisfaction. Boys feel shamefacedly that they are not as strong, as handsome and as brave as their hero, girls feel embarrassed because they are not as charming, as gracious and as beautiful as their heroine. This insecurity about one's self is one of the main characteristics of the adolescent. Its manifestations, the self-consciousness and/or overbearing manner, are well known. Perhaps less known is the fact that this insecurity is the motivation of the adolescent's needs for friendship. When the adolescent girl identifies herself with great enthusiasm with a girl friend with whom she can

share her interests in all their trivial details, she attains certain goals: in the girl friend she can permit herself to love herself, and to accept herself as a lovable person; together they have the courage to express the adoration for an ideal—woman or man—which she does not dare to approach alone, even in her fantasy. Thus the two together may create a communal fantasy through which they enjoy beauty and love and thus help each other to overcome their insecurity. In such a way they prepare for their later sexual role. The same is true for boys. While the boys are insecure about their own selves only the mutual respect of friends can eliminate their fears, can give them courage to express their thoughts and fantasies. In this enjoyment of their own and the friend's productivity, they may find enough gratification to enable them to postpone the step which they are afraid to take—the sexual approach toward the other sex.

The emotional state of adolescence can be described as a feeling of suspense. Boys and girls alike are filled with emotions and sensations for which they do not have either expression or adequate gratification. The purely sexual tension may be relieved by masturbation or by sexual intercourse at even this relatively early age. Yet neither calms the inner turmoil which is, after all, only partially motivated by purely physiological tension; it implies much more than mere glandular function; it involves the total personality. All that was absorbed during the repression of the oedipal conflict and all that has developed since then, is now relived in order to be absorbed again in the maturation of the personality during adolescence. The suspense, caused by long delay of gratification, is the price that the adolescent pays for love: this is the basis of their craving for affection, for romantic love.

Thus far we have described the adolescence of boys and girls as if it were an identical process. There are some basic similarities, such as the repetition of the psychodynamic conflict which was repressed at the oedipal level; there is a similarity in the emotional insecurity, in the guilt and fear connected with heterosexuality, but there are also very important differences in the maturation of the sexes.

The psychosexual maturation of girls, generally speaking, be-

gins at an earlier age and develops faster than that of boys. We recognize easily a dissimilarity between boys and girls with respect to the libidinal interest in their own bodies from early childhood on. This, according to psychoanalytic concepts, is directly related to anatomical sex differences.⁷ The little boy, aware of the organ which produces pleasure, concentrates upon his genitals for gratification; the little girl's interest in her body remains diffuse and is expressed mostly as generalized pleasurable sensations and curiosity in herself. The little girl's great interest in looking at herself in the mirror and her early interest in dresses are not merely imitations of adults; they represent a basic need to find gratification in her body. This desire increases during adolescence, unless she has repressed her femininity, and with it, suppressed her wish to improve her appearance. This interest was not repressed during the latency period; it was merely displaced. At that time she played with her dolls, which then represented not only her children but also herself and the preoccupation with them showed that the center of a girl's fantasy is herself. In this the girls differ from boys. Just as the little boy already had manifold object interests, so the boy at his puberty continues his preoccupation with objects and activities; he builds and plans, he collects and hoards stamps, seashells and butterflies. All this is for the purpose of security and self-improvement. While the girl usually wants to improve herself concretely, directly and bodily, the boy wants to improve himself primarily by his achievements. Work, earning money and school work are preoccupations and gratifications which, he fantasizes, will finally make him a better and more lovable person. The ego-ideal has a more lasting effect on the personality of boys than it does for girls. Girls "adore" the movie actress, but usually they are early reconciled to the fact that they will not themselves become one—even while they go through the paces of affecting the poses, the dress, and hair style of this and that movie star. The boy also openly "adores"; but he not only strives to emulate his ideal, he works to be it. The "craze" to

⁷ Sigmund Freud: "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Differences between the Sexes," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, VIII:133, 1927.

be a pilot, to be a commando, to be a "gang-buster" or to be a spy is the expression of the strength and permanence of his ego-ideal. For the boy the meaning of his fantasy is: "I will be loved when I am perfect; when I am perfect I can select any girl, the girl I want." This sort of preparation is especially successful if the intensity of the sexual urge does not put the boy under undue pressure and thus create conflicts before he can master his impulses.

Whereas the boy is still free to project his life into the future, meanwhile modeling himself after various ideals, the girl is already preoccupied with the problem, "Who will love me? Am I lovable as I am? Can I and must I improve myself and who will love me then?" And she wants the answer impatiently. This was true for the girl of the Victorian age as well as it is for the girl of today. But then, she had to wait and ward off her impatience, satisfying herself in fantasy alone. Now the social customs permit her quite a freedom of activity. Thus it will depend mainly on her courage how soon she will find through the boys an answer to her ardent questions. She will be reassured if they find her attractive. The boys, however, respond to her only if she has courage, confidence in her beauty or in her mastery over boys. This "self-assurance" is often characteristic of the "narcissistic girl" who has an internal awareness that she is not endangered by love, that she will not fall in love; thus she can play with her beauty and attract boys. The clue to her attractiveness lies in the shyness of the adolescent boy. While the girl takes the initiative, she relieves the boy of the realization of his shyness and lack of courage to lead her on.

Shyness is a defensive armor of the ego. Several forms of behavior are called by the same name. The child who withdraws behind the door when he sees a stranger does this because he does not know whether this person will like him, or not. If the child has previously had unfortunate experiences with people, he immediately behaves with hostility; he is afraid that he is not loved and in defense makes himself unlovable. Shyness, although it protects the ego, actually makes it impossible to acquire the new experiences which may correct the fear of not being loved. Thus shyness stands in the way of attaining the kindness

and the love which such individuals desire so ardently. This defensiveness characterizes the adolescents' behavior toward adults whom they do not trust; they cannot easily believe that the adults will accept them as they are now with their confusion, insecurity and rebelliousness. But this also characterizes the behavior of the adolescent girl and boy toward each other. They are shy with each other and act hostilely since they do not yet know how to express and how to attain what their emotions require. Even if shyness seems to be disappearing in our present-day youth we should not be deceived by such surface manifestations.

There are many disguises for feelings which are biologically predetermined, and shyness is one of them. It originates in a fear of the sexes, in the fear of the one of the other. This fear is not only better known to girls, it is also more deeply founded in girls than in boys. The girl's fear of sexuality—at least to a limited degree—is physiological: it originates in the fear of being hurt, in the fear of the organic changes within the body. This fear, as Helene Deutsch suggests,⁸ is the root of *feminine masochism*; it is a natural phenomenon which is very much enhanced by social factors. The "consequences" of sexuality are physiological for the girl and society's evaluation of virginity and its attitude toward illegitimate pregnancy augment the girl's fear of her sexual role. The sexual surrender of a woman is a deeply stirring, almost shock-like, experience. Freud assumed that a woman never forgets the man who deflowered her.⁹ With this act the woman gives up her defenses and isolation; if she is then abandoned, not only is her humiliation deep, but also her fears of inferiority and incompleteness are reawakened and reactivated. The emotional wound she has to bear henceforth is such an important one that one of the imperatives of our culture is to regulate relations between the sexes in a way which will protect the woman from desertion. Marriage before surrender! Thus the woman can permit and admit her sexual role with the

⁸ Helene Deutsch: *The Psychology of Women*, Vol. 1, Chapter 7, Grune & Stratton, Inc., New York, 1944.

⁹ Sigmund Freud: "Contributions to the Psychology of Love," *Collected Papers*, IV .217, Hogarth Press, London, 1925.

reassurance, guaranteed by religion, society and law that the man, her husband, cannot abandon her.

The young woman's fear of her growing sexuality is thus explained in its several aspects. Our explanation seems to place the man in a position of mastery. If this is so, what, we may ask, causes the fear of sexuality in adolescent men—or in men altogether? Their sexual impulses do not bring about danger rooted in biology. Moreover, society gives them greater freedom to express their sexuality. Yet psychopathology reveals that the fear of being harmed by sexuality exists in man, too. Freud referred to this as *castration fear*¹⁰ and meant by it not only the fear of losing the penis, but more importantly the fear of any kind of depreciation of the personality. Psychoanalysis has shown that the child's expectation of punishment for his sexual impulses, his fear that he may lose the organ which enables him to feel pleasure, expresses the biological and sociological fact that *man's self-esteem* is rooted in his sexual power. Thus the term *castration fear* became a generally used expression referring not only to actual loss of physiological virility but to the anxiety over any experience which may diminish the person's self-esteem. Yet one more aspect of this problem should be stressed here. Castration fear becomes prevalent in the emotional household of those men whose personalities are dominated by passive-receptive tendencies. If desires and strivings which are typically feminine and dynamically passive play an important role in a man's imagination, castration—the loss of masculinity—becomes an emotional possibility for him. Essentially the same holds true for women: those whose masculine tendencies are strong enough to form a biological substratum for the fantasy of having a masculine organ will be disturbed by this in their acceptance of femininity. Although in men the passive-receptive tendencies, and in women the masculine desires, may have been fostered by environmental influences, yet the origin of these phenomena can be traced to the *bisexuality of the biologicalanlage*. When, in either sex, during the course of physiological maturation, the sexual impulses become compelling, they mobi-

¹⁰ Sigmund Freud · "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," *Collected Papers*, III 473, Hogarth Press, London, 1925.

lize the fear which was once absorbed in and resolved by the personality development. Men and women, doubting their personalities, may regard their sexual needs as a source of emotional and physiological danger. Against the fear of sexuality love is the remedy.



Love does not come suddenly and by chance. It is the achievement of a personality which has reached a specific level of maturation. From then on love itself will have again the function of leading the personality to a more complete maturation. As we have shown, and as Reik also puts it, love is not identical with the simple demands of sexual glands: the relationship between man and woman is a complex function which involves the total personality. The phenomenology of love, so excellently described by Reik,¹¹ depends upon the fate of those impulses which were responsible for the development of the personality. This will decide the content of the fantasies, the quality of suspense, the individual degree of depression, which are not only characteristic of the mood of the adolescent but also recur throughout life as an indicator of the needs for love.

The melancholic, introverted and depressive mood is normal for the adolescent. It expresses the conflict between the ego-ideal, which is oriented toward perfection, and sexuality which is regarded as "sin," as unacceptable to the ego-ideal. *Love*, in the sense here used, is an emotion which resolves the conflict. Through it sexuality becomes acceptable and the ego, liberated from a state of degradation, becomes elated. The "loved one" comes up to the standards of the ego-ideal; the individual does not need to feel that what he has been harboring and sensing is not "nice" since he has now found the person for whom these feelings were intended all along. This demonstration to the ego that its conflicts can be resolved, that it can come to a solution, is experienced as ecstasy.

Although we have stressed the emotional qualities of love, we cannot deny that there is a physiological substratum for it, pro-

¹¹ Theodore Reik: *A Psychologist Looks at Love*, Farrar & Rinehart, New York, 1944.

vided by the functioning of the sexual glands. This functioning does not appear suddenly and all at once. It reaches maturation slowly. And while the process is unfolding physiologically, it is felt by the ego as suspended expectancy. From adolescence on, for both men and women, this waiting period means an experiencing of doubts about one's self, about one's person, about one's "right" to love and to be loved. In the fear that they will not be chosen, boys and girls alike try to perfect their personalities, not only by conscious learning but also by unconscious identification with ego-ideals. All this, in order to become an ideal for somebody, a person worthy of being loved. After one is chosen by the ideal, the woman or the man feels that he has become a better person, and through this gratification feels superior to every one else.

Love means to surrender what one calls one's personality and it makes the loved person the measure of all measures. It puts the loved one in the position of the ego-ideal; thus one appears just a suffix to his or her will. *Romantic love*, that is, the acute phase of love, is self-effacing. Being loved by the ego-ideal means that one has been brought close to his own ideal. Grati-fied in this way, one cannot demand more. Many women say, "He does not need to marry me; he loves me, that is enough," or "I love him so much, I don't even want him to marry me; that would be too much." Women, more often than men, are afraid of such love, just because it is so self-effacing. A young, very attractive girl could not make up her mind between several suitors. She played more or less consciously with them, measuring her own and their respective attractiveness. Then she met a man at a party. She looked at him and felt stunned. She said, "I could not have said a word, had he talked to me. My heart began to pound and I felt a wave of warmth flow through me. I knew that this was It. I avoided meeting him at the party and I never want to see him again." This girl did not dare to find her master. She and many others demonstrate the fear of surrendering one's individuality to the mastery of another whom one admires for his superiority. Men may often feel the same way about women, whom they may avoid because of the fear of becoming dependent upon them.

If such an intense, acute love is allowed to develop, one becomes dependent for one's emotional gratification upon one person exclusively, however, one not only loves but also fears and therefore hates the person to whom so much power is delegated. This ambivalence is recognizable in every great romantic love in spite of its bliss. It lies back of the fears often expressed by the great lovers of fiction and back of the theme, "I can't live with you and I can't live without you." In everyday life, although the loving woman feels for a long time, "The more I give the more I have—for both are infinite,"¹² after a time she begins to feel envious of the man who receives so much. The envy, hostility, rebellion against complete surrender to another person become manifest repeatedly in one or the other partner. Yet, if this hostility is not so great that it interrupts the relationship, it becomes an important factor in its further development. Through it the originally passionate but ambivalent love undergoes several changes.

What lovers offer each other represents, in the language of psychodynamics, an exchange of ego-ideals. *Passion*, as we understand it, is a struggle within the individual to reach his goal of maturation through another individual selected for this function. The struggle begins at puberty within the individual; it unfolds by forcing the individual to accept his sexuality as a part of his personality and finally impels him to seek an object for his love. The aim of passion is this: to transcend the boundaries of the individuality through unification with the beloved. The sexual act gratifies this need; but it encompasses more than the need for physiological satisfaction; it achieves gratification within the total personality of each of the lovers. Fearful as one might have been before the union, after love is satisfied the ego feels relieved from its insecurity. Put simply: each partner feels, "I became like you because you, whom I admire and adore, loved me." One became a better and a worthier person through love—one came nearer and nearer to his own ego-ideal—thus through love, fear and insecurity disappear. This is the explanation of the happiness in love.

¹² William Shakespeare · *Romeo and Juliet*.

The ego, strengthened by the satisfaction of being loved, becomes more independent of the demands of the love-object and may even defend itself against complete surrender. If the original ambivalence and hostility were great, they may now come to the fore; the result is quarrels and guilt. The guilt creates, anew, a mood of contrite dependence which can be undone only by passionate love. If the identification between the lovers progresses and the ambivalence diminishes, the original intensity of the suspense, the original passion, will not be achieved again. This does not indicate a devaluation of the sexual object. It is a result of the emotional reality and expresses the balance of the dynamic interrelation between the lovers. The originally deprived and dependent ego, having received reassurance in the identification, does not feel insecure again. The fulfilment of love changed the basis of the relationship. It grew from an exchange of ego-ideals to the relationship of two individuals who share the same reality: the oneness may be expressed in common ambitions and desires. If this identification is relatively free from hostility, it becomes the expression of a happy and enduring relationship. Yet, if the suspense which initiated passion cannot be continued, the sexual excitability decreases. What one received through love one now possesses in one's personality; one cannot ask for it again with the same ardor. Lovers know this instinctively and they often consciously seek to arouse a limited degree of hostile tension, such as does not interfere with the process of enriching identification but renders new stimulus to it.

Yet the desexualization of the projected ego-ideal proceeds and the love relationship reaches its next phase. It usually takes the complex intimacy of marriage to arrive at it. The wife who becomes a mother and the husband who becomes a father undergo slowly a metamorphosis in their relationship to each other: they begin to represent to each other, at least to a degree, the parent as well. Husband and wife often address each other as their children address them, "Mother and Father," or "mummy and daddy"—but not merely for the sake of imitation. This habit also expresses a psychological reality: namely, that the marital partners after their love is partially desexualized become as if they were parent for each other and a part, often a

very critical part of each other's personality, of each other's super-ego. It is now as it was once before, when in the latency period, the erotic phase of development passed and father and mother were reinstated as conscience, as critical instances within the self. Thus it is that the marital partners become the critical measure each in the other's personality. We repeat here, it is easier and pleasanter to live with a conscience which is developed on the basis of gratitude, love and respect, than with one developed out of the fear of punishment. The love of husband and wife for each other, though partially desexualized, is not lost in the process of developing to this phase. The happily married couple accept this new phase as a basic expression of their love, of their oneness; and for many it adds zest to their evenings away from the children.

Some husbands and wives, however, cannot "take it," this new phase of love. One or the other may rebel superficially or even seriously. One may resent the process just as one resented the authority of conscience, the responsibility of maturation. Yet one eventually accepts it as one did before, since it is the repetition of the same psychodynamic process of maturation. The identification between husband and wife, whether it is expressed in cultural aspirations, in their children, or in their everyday living, will "hold" the marriage even after erotic passion recedes. This is the dialectic of marriage: each of the partners, stimulated by the other, undergoes a process of maturation which leads step by step to the complete integration of the personality. Thus even if passion, the acuteness of it, has receded, there remains enough of the glow of the original love to enrich the relationship with affection, tenderness, mutual respect and gratefulness. Indeed, they have much to be grateful for, they, who can achieve such maturation in their marital interrelation. The fortunate people who began their marriage with passion and went through this process of maturation in mutual interchange represent the rare examples of happy marriage.

Chapter 2

MARRIAGE

We described the role of love in the maturation of personality and indicated that the lasting interpersonal relationship achieved within marriage is best able to secure the adaptation of personalities in a harmonious symbiosis. Like Ovid, we too have described an ideal process. He did not know of psychodynamics, but he pictured—as we did—the process of desexualizing identification which leads to happy old age; and he felt that he had to go back to the “Golden Age” to find his Philemon and Baucis, for he realized, as all modern sociologists do, that civilization deeply interferes with the evolution of undisturbed relationship between the sexes. Yet, today, as in his time, fairy tales end and curtains fall with the illusion “and they lived happily ever after.” Such is mankind’s ever-lasting hope: that love, for which one has to struggle so hard, should last in undisturbed serenity forever. Such is the power of love in projecting itself into the future in order to fulfil its biological task, it has to last and endure for the purpose of reproduction and for the care of the young.

Biologically compelling as this force is, it works under such great strain, it demands so much sacrifice from the individuals within the marriage that society has had to concentrate its ethics and customs upon the institution which secures stability for survival. As if society could not afford to trust the individual’s selection based upon love, laws related to marrying are designed not to investigate the love but rather the fitness for marriage, the ability to produce healthy children, and to protect them as well as the mother. On the other hand, the individuals act as if they would feel almost offended by such laws; while they comply with them, they like to feel as individuals who, motivated by the sacred zest of love, were above such legislation.

There is a great variation in regard to the interrelation between marital partners in different cultures. In societies where marriage functions exclusively by tradition, with neglect of the individual's preference for the marital partner, marriages endure. Are they happy? They may be content, since individualistic demands recede into the background whenever the total weight of society forces the partners to continue the marriage. The individuals growing up in such a society have learned what to expect of marriage. While the society saves them from responsibility and conflict, it also deprives them of what we, in our society, would define as individual happiness.

In our society marriage is supposed to function less by tradition and more by love. On the basis of the ethical principles of individualism, we expect that "free will" and "free choice" will not only support the marriage but enhance its happiness. Marriage has to function by and for the sake of love, that is, not only for reproduction, but also for the heightened maturation and enriched capacity to love. Yet marriage based on individual choice, burdened by such expectations, often does not endure, or if it does, it is only by compromise and sacrifice. Just as in a functioning democracy criticism is free and new integration is reached by overcoming the antagonistic forces, so in our society, marriages represent a form of development which is achieved step by step after the antagonism of the partners has been conquered. This antagonism is not a negation of love; it exists alongside the love, probably as the representation of the biological polarity between the sexes. Passionate, romantic love may be regarded as the grand offensive of the youthful organism to overcome his fear and antagonism toward the other sex. But it is the law of dynamism that mastery cannot be achieved by one attack. Just as the emotional and physiological strength for love was collected by long years of internal struggle during adolescence, so it takes many years until man and woman in marriage, after having overcome their mutual antagonism, "will come together as human beings in order simply, seriously and patiently to bear in common the difficult generation that is their burden" ¹

¹ Rainer Maria Rilke: *Letters to a Young Poet* (translation: M. D. Herter Norton), W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1934, p. 38.

This is a difficult and often a painful task even for those who started out with the even step of mutual passion. Either one or the other may fall out on the way. It may be that one of the partners is basically fixated in previous developmental phases and is unable to take a new step toward maturation; while one may remain unchanged, the other may progress. How much deeper will be the gap in the mutual development of husband and wife if the pace is determined by unfolding personalities who did not find each other in the passion of true love? And the majority of marriages, even in our society—so proud of the role that love plays in it—do not start on the basis of passion.

Marriages are very often motivated by external and internal circumstances other than love. External motivations are usually economic and social expectations connected with marriage. Women as well as men may often mistake for love the willingness to marry a person who is able to satisfy their social ambitions. This may occur without the realization of the part that compromise plays in their decision. Very often it is not the external, obvious factors of convenience which are responsible for such marriages, but the internal factors such as the fear of love, the unwillingness to wait, and the prematurity of the young generation which enters marriage in order to diminish its emotional insecurity. One may cite innumerable examples for each of these groups. One sees the girl of today, just as in the past, struggling to make the decision between two suitors and selecting almost invariably the one whose sexual power is the least threatening. Her choice is an immediate, emotional expedient to avoid the complete surrender in love. After having achieved emotional security in such a marriage, she may regret that she gave up the chance for great love. The realization of such a mistake is often traumatic, especially for those who look upon marriage as an irrevocable fact. We can often observe a valiant struggle to suppress and to deny the disappointment for which one can blame only one's self. This emotional constellation is the main source of acute panic in young women. The anxiety often causes restricting phobias, since a woman has to avoid what she is afraid of—namely, that she may fall in love—when this is not permitted any more.

Men and women with stronger egos and well-preserved adaptability may be content with the tasks of marriage even if it was one of convenience and not of love. Usually the husband and wife, as well as their families, are confident of the success of such marriages. They may comply with many traditions regarding what constitutes the foundations for successful marriage—the length of the period of friendship or engagement, the age difference, the income, the schooling, the religious affiliations, the family history, and so on. And from this their own hopes gain confirmation and reassurance. They, and very often their counselors, are not aware that the conflict between the present individualistic and the passing traditional society often clashes in such marriages. In traditional society the interrelation between marital partners is regulated. There is little opportunity for comparisons and little need for envy. Thus the process of identification may proceed evenly and with inner contentment. In our society the partners of such unions have many opportunities to compare their own fate with that of others; they may envy those who were more courageous, and thus they may become discontented in their marriage.

It is certainly impossible to account for all factors which may interfere with harmonious adaptation of the marital partners. Our individualistic society permits too deep and too many deviations in the development of each person from childhood on. This will be expressed by the disparity of expectations and aspirations in relation to love, to marriage and even toward life in general. Whatever the psychological foundations of the marriage were, there are too many stimuli in our highly differentiated life which may cause conflicts by provoking different responses in the marital partners. The fulfilment of love, as we indicated, leaves the partners each free and confident to pursue enhanced ego-development. In fortunate cases this will be mainly the result of mutual interchange. In other cases it takes separate directions and separate courses. The one seems to the other, and even to himself, to have gone too far and too much alone. The gulf between them will be felt painfully, and each will be aware of the other's distress. Or it may be that the basis of identification is destroyed by hostility, by ambitions which

lead in different directions and which can hardly be satisfied within the marriage. To repeat: there are almost as many variations of discrepancies between the characters of husband and wife as there are marriages. Some of them cause small discontent, others indicate irreparable incompatibilities.

What is often referred to as "adjustment in the marriage" is a part of the process of adaptation which occurs unconsciously and spontaneously through the passage of love. If such adaptation is not attained, the "adjustment" is achieved by conscious attempts to reach compromise solutions. The realistic aims of marriage give ample opportunity for this. We speak about "working out the marriage"—so aware are we of the problems involved and the amount of good will necessary to solve them. If this is the work of conscious good will without emotional gratification, the solution may be enduring but not satisfying. Bitterness and suppressed hostility may undermine what conscious effort tried to achieve. If, however, the sacrifice of such struggle is balanced by sexual satisfaction and by emotional gratification in and through children, the marital partners will feel rewarded and the marriage will lead finally to successful identification. Many people achieve happiness, which was warded off by interpersonal obstacles, later in their life—in the post-erotic phase of their marriage.



The marriage, this ambivalent, struggling, passionate and confident interpersonal relationship, forms the core of the *family*. To it is entrusted the biological and psychological task of producing and raising the next generation. Emotional security, the confident and loving interrelation between husband and wife, represents the psychological reservoir from which the emotional security of the child is nourished. The interrelation between parents and child creates an intrinsic psychodynamic unit to which we refer as the *triangle: father—mother—child*. The first such triangle in the family, the relationship between the parents and the first child, exists undisturbed only as long as the child is an only child. The balance is disturbed by each following child, or for that matter, by any other emotional experience

of either parent which is strong enough to break through the exclusiveness of this primary but complex unit. Such a relationship—the triangle—develops between the parents and each of their children separately and with different emotional content, devising for every member of the family its specific psychological place. It is well known that the psychological environment of a first child—his or her relationship to each parent and their relation to their first-born—is different from the emotional environment of the second or third or any of the following children. While each forms in itself a distinct triangle, each unit is dynamically influenced by the other units within the family. These various psychodynamic interrelations within the family influence the personality development of each of its members. Thus, each individual reflects in his character the interactions of the psychological forces within his family. This complex system results in a delicate balance which is keenly sensitive to every change within the family and has to be reestablished in the adjustments to everyday events. There are always happenings—pleasant and unpleasant. There are always tensions and reliefs, worries and joys which may come and go with the routine of life, or may leave lasting traces and indelible memories. The balance of the family changes decisively when one or several of its members separate from it. Children grow up and leave the family for school, for work, or for marriage. Sickness and death definitely interrupt the continuity of the family relationship and require a new adjustment from those who remain. Almost similarly traumatic for the family is the separation necessitated by military service during war-time since this implies not only geographical distance and change in the mode of living, but also all the dangers inherent in war.

Not only he who leaves the family to enter the service but also each member of the family has to adjust to this change in the total system, each according to his own psychological place within the family. Before we embark upon the theme of this book—discussion of the emotional processes in those who left and those who remained home—we shall briefly analyze the psychodynamic process involved in overcoming the *trauma of separation* within the self.

Chapter 3

PSYCHODYNAMICS OF SEPARATION

Freud, in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle,"¹ describes the following preoccupation of a one and a half year old little boy. He was a well-behaved and in every respect a sensible little boy, when suddenly he developed a habit of flinging into the corner of the room or under the bed all the little things he could lay his hands on. He accompanied this action by an expression of interest and gratification, emitting a loud, long, drawn out "O—O—O—O" which, as one learned later, stood for the German word "fort" which means "gone." It became clear to the observers that the child used all his toys only to play "being gone." After a while the child added another phase to his play. He played not only "being gone," but "coming back," too. He managed this in the following way: he had a wooden reel with a piece of string attached to it; he threw this under and behind a draped cot, uttering his O—O—O—O sound, and then he drew the reel back by the string, announcing joyfully, "da" which means "here." This complete game, as Freud interpreted it, represented the repetition of and the mastery over a painful experience; namely, that lately his mother disappeared daily for some hours and was out of his reach.

This is not a single observation. It may be repeated innumerable times. Every child repeats in his play events which have made impressions upon him. This little boy at first liberated himself from the role of being the suffering subject of being left alone. In the game he is active and himself creates the situation of being left alone and by this he overcomes his fear. Relieved from fear, his ego is strengthened enough to permit himself the foretaste of the happy reunion in the successful part of his game.

¹ Sigmund Freud: *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, The International Psycho-Analytical Press, London, 1922.

Thus the game played a double role in his emotional household. The active repetition of the disagreeable experience avoids and partially uses up (abreaction) the fear which was connected with the original experience. The ego, liberated from fear, becomes stronger and better able to master the situation at hand and at the same time it prepares itself for new experiences. We may add, that this one and a half year old child had no internal conflict as yet with his mother. Her going away was painful to him, her coming back was pleasant—without any mental reservation. If this child had a conflict with the mother and this had caused him to fear, for example, that his mother might punish him after she returned, the emotional situation would become more complex. Although her going away would be painful, her coming back would not be a joy, either. The child would not be able to decide what to wish—thus his play would be inhibited—or his ego would have to find another solution. In illustration, the study of the psychodynamic processes motivating asthma convinced us that separation becomes traumatic if it mobilizes a conflict in respect to the person from whom separation is impending or has occurred. This, and similar observations, although they may appear far-fetched, are pertinent to our discussion. They indicate that not only the separation is traumatic, but, in case of internal conflict, the expectations connected with reunion are also traumatic, i.e., they are connected with anxiety. Since in our present-day civilization interpersonal relationships without conflicts rarely exist, we may generally assume that separation as well as reunion may stir up emotional conflicts which, even if they do not cause manifestly neurotic symptoms, demand an adjustment which represents a greater or lesser strain on the total emotional economy.

In the example of the little boy we can see that the trauma was his; he suffered from being left alone, whereas his mother probably did not suffer from missing him for some hours. She, being free to return, did not need to extend her absence for longer than she found it necessary and convenient without causing her to worry for her child. The traumatic effect of separation, with regard to the person who stays home, however, does not depend upon age alone. A mother, remaining home after

her son's wedding, usually feels deeply disturbed; for her this separation is traumatic, while for the son who leaves her, it is an exciting and happy event. We do not need to elaborate further to show that separation is not evenly traumatic for the individuals involved, that the emotional response to the separation will depend upon the situation to which each of the individuals has to adjust after the separation.

This, although a truism, has to be pointed out since it is the key to our further discussions of the differences in the emotional attitudes of the soldiers and of the members of their families. Many of the men—young or old, married or single—would leave the family for college or for business purposes, without effects similar to the emotional responses which accompany induction into the service. Similarly, the family, without the implications of war, would respond differently, depending upon the purpose of the separation and on the interpersonal relationship which was interrupted.

For the men leaving their families to go to the Army the trauma lies not in leaving home, but in the necessity of the adjustment to Army life with all its implications. The complete change of their environment represents not only the interruption of their interpersonal relationships but also is a threat to their personalities. To overcome this threat and to master the new situation they must utilize all their ego-strength. Like the little boy who in his play denied the fact that he was left alone, the soldier denies the fact of separation by clinging to the continuation—at least in fantasy—of all the interpersonal relationships which he left behind.

It is different for the members of the soldier's family. The separation represents a trauma for them, too. The individual response may vary from a sense of aloneness and longing for the soldier to mourning and grief, even to acute panic. Whatever the emotional reactions of the individual may be, the external environment remains the same. Life, as it continues in the same frame as it was before separation, shapes the internal adjustment to separation. The task of the ego then is not adaptation to a new external situation but the mastery of the initial emotional response: the anxiety, the grief, and the lonesomeness. Here also we are reminded of the little boy who invented his

game for the purpose of overcoming his lonesomeness and his fear. Similarly mothers and wives, sisters and sweethearts, will find ways to overcome their anxiety. One "keeps busy," the other "goes out," plays and fantasies to overcome the primary response to separation. By this, however, the emotional relationship changes. Just like the little boy, having mastered the initial fear, gets ready for new adventures, so the members of the soldier's family after they overcome the primary reaction, slowly and in different ways, change their emotional attitude toward the soldier. This is an almost unnoticeable, gradual shift in the interpersonal relationship, which may account for the fact that women at home responded so strongly when psychiatrists began to speak about *estrangement*. Whereas soldiers far away from home, in the intensity of their desire to come home, generally did not believe that estrangement was possible, the women at home responded to the warning since they sensed its emotional reality. We return once more to the little boy. There we mentioned that he would not have been as joyous in announcing the return of the mother had he been afraid of punishment or aware of guilt. Similarly, women or men, civilians and soldiers, respond with anxious tensions to the reunion if they sense that the conflicts within their relationship did not diminish, but rather were enhanced during the separation. It might have been nothing more than "living down" the separation or a change in their tempo of living or lack of participation in each other's suffering. Minute things as well as more important events may cause actual or fantasied guilt between individuals separated for a long time. These events indicate that there is not only a *trauma of separation*, but also a *trauma of reunion*. This may be—and we hope it is—an exaggerated term when used in regard to reunion. Yet, when peace came suddenly, we could not help but become aware of the anxious tension which made the good news to be accepted only slowly. The emotional household geared to one sort of living did not smoothly shift to the expectation of a joyous reunion in all instances. The fear of the new adjustment had forecast its shadow.

In the coming chapters while we discuss the psychology of the adjustments during the time of separation, we will also learn about the problems of the *new adaptations in post-war living*.

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PART II

THE SOLDIER

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While we discuss the interaction between the individual and the group in the example of the soldier, we shall not forget that his situation is not unique. The anxieties and tribulations of many young people who leave the family for college where "they have to make good," the problems of adolescents in camps, etc., are regulated by the same emotional dynamism and present problems of adjustment similar to those of the soldier.

Chapter 4

ADJUSTMENT IN THE SERVICE: THE DOUBLE ORIENTATION

Going into the Service means for everybody, regardless of age and sex, leaving a family of which he was an important member and leaving, also, the community of his friends and his work. It means giving up those attachments in which he was an individual—loved or hated, pitied or envied. It means giving up that part of his life in which he planned his own future and was master of it. This life in its many ramifications was interrupted when he entered the vast organization of the Army. Although he was soon to be a part of a group, he would be leading a basically different life. Not only would his daily routine be different; not only would he be taking on a new and unaccustomed occupation; more importantly, he would be allowed to be the master of his own destiny only to a very limited degree; henceforth he would have to submit his plans, his future, even his life to an impersonal and super-individual organization.

Every sudden and deep-going change in an individual's life is experienced as a threat to *the continuity of the personality*. The feeling that one will and can go on from day to day being oneself is necessary for self-survival. Without it one could not go through the day's routine, or plan for a future, or wait and postpone the gratification of an immediate desire for a future goal. Without it one could not hold on to attachments of the past and use them, in memory and fantasy, as consolation and teacher in the present and as guide and incentive to actions in the future. Of course, the individual is not aware of this tendency which is the core of his being. He learned its effects when, in infancy, hungry or in pain he cried for his mother so that she should restore him with her feeding and soothing to the state in which

he was not hungry and not in pain. And so it follows that, although one is not aware of how, at first the mother, later the father and siblings, enter into his self and then the continuity of his personality becomes dependent upon his relationships with mother, father, and siblings. Ordinarily, this feeling of continuity of the self goes on smoothly from day to day. Of course, there are times when "I'm not myself today" or "There's something wrong with me; I just can't concentrate," and one recalls that one has had a "bad dream" or received some unpleasant news or been interrupted in one's work and could not resume it again because one was accustomed to a routine. And there is the query of Edward Everett Horton (radio): "If I'm not Mr. X and I'm not Mr. Y and I'm not Mr. Z; and I know I'm not; oh, goodness me, who can I be?" Only sudden and deep-going change can disrupt this feeling of continuity in a well-integrated ego, and then anxiety and not the awareness of the disruption comes to the fore.

This danger to the personality motivated the emotions of the soldier when he was first transformed from a civilian into a recruit. He had left the people and the scenes which were so much a part of him, he had left all his attachments behind him and he is now standing in line at a gate getting his new G. I. clothes, and with them the insecurity that he will experience. In this newness, the recruit could not invest his emotions and ambitions in the next hour or even in the next day's routine. His interests, his emotional investments were still where he had left them—at home—and, therefore, he is very much bored with all that happens around him. This boredom of the recruit can be best described as a sort of emotional emptiness. He feels no emotions for the Army as yet and his emotions for the home are cut off. The recruit is "stunned"; the continuity of his life seems interrupted—yesterday he was a civilian, today he is in uniform, in a pair of shoes much too tight or too large for him; all day long he has been running around for this and that article of clothing; he is not a part of his environment yet. In order to become a part of it, the recruit must become interested in his new environment. The Army knew this and left him some days before his training began, so he had time to wait in line to tele-

phone home or to write letters conveying his experiences, for he lives more at home than there where his body is.

The normal adaptable man is naturally curious about what will happen to him and thus his interest in his surroundings gradually awakens. He begins to link the present with the past and the future. Those who are not adaptable remain in a state of emotional emptiness and continue to be bored and uninterested. *Boredom* serves also as a defense against the fear that the Army may demand too much from them. Thus they withhold their attachment, they refuse to enter in the new relationship; their boredom represents an unconscious sullen revolt.

Normally this state is overcome. The soldier suddenly, as if awakened to the reality of his situation, responds to the Army. His first awareness is one of painful realization of the differences between home and his present situation. Thus he becomes filled with longing, he becomes homesick. It is not that the soldier does not become bored or homesick later in his military career, but later these feelings arise under specific circumstances, whereas in the life of the recruit this emotional emptiness and the *homesickness* appear to be a general, immediate response. The Navy sends a letter to the parents of the enlisted men (under eighteen) stating these emotional conditions as a reason for the regulation that the men in boot-training can be visited only after the first four weeks. Perhaps the same reason holds for the Army regulation which does not permit the recruit to leave his camp in the first three weeks. Otherwise, during this time too many men would have gone A.W.O.L., even those who were to become good soldiers after they had overcome the first few weeks of strangeness.

Those who know of the great enthusiasm which fills the boys going into the Air Forces to be pilots will wonder about the correctness of these statements, and of course, they need qualifications. There are many whose ambitions, wishes and aspirations were projected in the expectation connected with the Service. They were more than excited when they finally arrived at the gate of fulfilment. But they, too, will react with disappointment to the routine which slows down the tempo of their wishes; they

too will become homesick, but, usually only after they have adjusted to a routine.

The homesickness, the dependent wish to be with those for whom one is an individual and not a number, is always awakened in those who had a home, who had people to be dependent upon. However, in the Army there are also men who do not become homesick and who are ready to transfer all their emotional life upon the military organization. A Negro soldier, a very fine, intelligent man, who lived an isolated life without a family, worked to earn his living and to go to school during the evening. He waited for his induction with great eagerness. He said, "I wanted to be the best soldier in the U. S. Army." And he was a good soldier. The Army was for him the first community worth belonging to. He was an ambitious man. For him the platoon was the same as school—one does what is required of one, does it better than the others and then one will be promoted, perhaps even skip a grade. He went step by step up the ladder until he was commissioned from the ranks. His ambitions were realized. He had felt, from the very beginning, a part of the Army which promised him the satisfaction of his ambition. He loved the competition, since he was confident of winning; he could identify with the group; he hoped to achieve, at least limited, leadership. Thus not only in the Air Forces and in the Navy but in other branches as well, the Services may satisfy a specific emotional need or ego-ambition of the person whose adjustment is then better than that of others. They become more soldiers than civilians. The others, although they, too, become a part of the fighting machinery of the "best Army," emotionally remain rather civilians than soldiers. At least that is how the soldier would evaluate himself.

The soldier, overcoming his first lonesomeness and strangeness, adapts himself to the task of soldiering; he learns skills and techniques. The most important aspect of his development, however, is emotional; it occurs unconsciously and represents the prerequisite of all his other learnings: *he becomes a part of a group.*

Every organized group consists of a leader and of the members of the group. A group, like a family, functions by the bal-

ance of the emotional forces which were active in its formation and in its maintenance. This may not appear so obvious in the Army with its tremendous multiplication of small groups and their systemization into larger ones. Yet the leader of the group has many similarities to the father of the family. the members of the group, as if they were children, rely upon his ideals, his purposes, and upon him as the individual capable of fulfilling his responsibilities toward his followers. The members of the group, like siblings within a family, identify with each other in willingness to help him to achieve a task, which thus becomes a common goal for the group. The function of the emotional relationship between leaders and members on the one hand and among the members of the group on the other, is manifold. The leader enlists the help and loyalty of the members to achieve the goal. The members not only give their work but they also relinquish much of their individual freedom for the sake of the common goal—but in return they are relieved from the responsibility which they would carry were they standing alone. While they give each other mutual help, they are rewarded by mutual protection and by the prestige of the group.

Although the common goal, the ideological foundation of the group, is important for the function of the group, the influence of leadership (i.e., the relationship between leader and members) is more direct and immediate. This was very often emphasized as the measure of the morale of the group. Soldiers in battle will accept gratefully good leadership. They will recognize it even during their training period. However, during the training period the leader represents the undesired authority so reminiscent of the "tyranny" of childhood. As if the soldier was holding his sergeant responsible for his being in the Army, he often behaves, if not actually then verbally or in his thinking, as a schoolboy does toward a teacher whom he does not like. The sergeant becomes the target of the pent-up hostility and the bitterness because he could not remain civilian. But the soldier knows better; he knows that he has to become a soldier. And this outlet—the expression of his unwillingness and hostility—however bitter it may be, serves as a help in his new situation. While he is consciously reluctant to become a member of the

group, he gains a great deal if he succeeds in adjusting to it. The group will satisfy his need for protection and dependence and also his ambition for recognition and prestige. These gratifications maintain an equilibrium against the hardships inherent in his situation, thus affording an emotional balance without which he cannot function successfully as a soldier.



It is a hard school to which the Army subjects its soldiers, and it is different from any other school which the soldier might have attended before. The goal of learning in civilian, as in Army life, is attainment of skills which provide security and success. In the Army the security means safety, and success means survival. Thus while in civilian schools one prepared for a better future, in the Army training one prepares for a future which can be secure only if one can avoid death or injury. The training in the Army, therefore, differs from civilian schooling in that its methods do not maintain the illusion of safety. Fear, as we have pointed out, is a function of the total organism for the purpose of preparedness; it keeps the organism in a state of alertness; it will accelerate its function should danger actually arise. The Army thus uses the fear for intensification of the training. One learns better, more quickly, if one's interest is kept alive by the feeling that this skill may be needed to save one's life. Yet this utilization of fear in training, however successful, has still another emotional effect upon the soldier; it keeps alive his desire to return to the past, to his home, in which there was no necessity to learn to kill and no acute danger of being killed. This fear of his military future increases his need to cling to his past personality. The harder the training, the more he invokes his past. How many boys during bayonet practice recalled again and again that they had been taught not to kill; how many felt remorse that they had revolted against the church. Now the past represents safety, protection against all dangers that may come from without and within.

The emotional life of the soldier flows in two big channels. With one part of his personality he learns to be a part of a big organization and learns to function within it; and with the

other part he struggles to preserve his past personality and strives away from his military existence. This split, this *double orientation* of the soldier's personality, began already before he entered the Army, but became more intense after he emerged from his initial homesickness with a greater dependence on home than he had ever felt before, and this doubleness of his orientation remains with him and becomes intensified any time when insecurity and deprivation increase his fear. In order to survive, his fear evokes the past and all that was good in it.

Harry Brown, in "A Walk in the Sun,"¹ gives a classical description of this: "War without virtue in itself, breeds virtue. It breeds patience in the impatient and heroism in the cowardly. But mostly it breeds patience. For war is a dull business. The dullest business on earth. War is a period of waiting. Each day of it is crammed with the little hesitations of men uncertain of themselves and awed by the ghastly responsibilities—responsibilities of life and death, responsibilities of gods that had been thrust into their hands. The soldier waits for food, for clothing, for a letter, for a battle to begin. And often the food is never served, the clothing is never issued, the letter never arrives and the battle never begins. The soldier learns to wait, meekly hoping that something will happen. And when the period of waiting is at an end the something that does happen isn't what he expected. So in the end, he learns to wait and expect nothing. That is the patience, God's one great gift to the soldier. But he *refuses to confess his patience*. [Italics mine.] He curses the fact that he has to wait; he howls at those who cause the waiting. He swears at himself for being such a fool as to wait. And that too is good. For the man who waits silently is not a good soldier; he is no more than a stone." Thus Harry Brown describes not only the waiting of the endlessly fatigued soldier; he describes also the other part of his personality—he is angry with himself, laughs at himself, maintains his civilian freedom of criticizing, griping; and this is what keeps him alive as an individual.

Another classic of the war is Mauldin's Joe and Willie,² the

¹ Harry Brown: *A Walk in the Sun*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1944.

² Bill Mauldin: *Up Front*, Henry Holt & Company, New York, 1945.

unshaven ragged foot-soldiers. They became a classic not because the civilians like the terse sentences underneath these cartoons, but because the soldiers liked them so much. And when one analyzes the humor of these tragicomic cartoons one may realize that the key to their appeal is this: Joe and Willie express the double orientation of the soldier's consciousness. One is the civilian and the other is the weary foot-soldier. The civilian self of the soldier talks to his deprived, fatigued, frightened foot-soldier self in the cartoon on page 95 of Mauldin's "Up Front." It represents a battlefield. Bill is lying on the ground clutching his helmet as if to shut out the noise of guns. Joe is opening his sweater saying, "Ever notice th' funny sound these zippers make, Willie?" Yes, there were times when one could afford to listen to small sounds and even to be irritated by them. It is good to keep this in mind; otherwise one would be—just what? It feels good also to talk in "highfalutin'" tones about being a "fugitive from the law of averages" (page 39) when one is thinking for the thousandth time, "the next one will have my number on it." Thus he brings to mind his high school days and the exaggeration of the importance of knowledge while he is trying to forget what he is at the moment: a fearful, deprived, emotionally impoverished individual, what Grinker described as "the combat personality."³ And if one would doubt the dynamics of this humor—the continuation of the past self into the present—one should look at the cartoon on page 114. There it is without words: The cavalry sergeant who serves in a jeep in this war; his jeep is wrecked, he turns his head away in great pain while he is aiming to shoot his jeep in its head. It is obvious that the cavalry sergeant transferred the feeling that he used to have for his horse to his jeep. Soldiers and civilians respond to this scene without any explanation; for we all feel the need to carry over the past to fortify ourselves for the difficult present.

What is the psychodynamic process behind this double attitude? What necessitates it? And how does it function in order to help maintain the emotional balance of the soldier?

The great change from being a civilian to becoming a soldier

³ Roy R. Grinker and John P. Spiegel: *Men Under Stress*, The Blakiston Company, Philadelphia, 1945.

threatens the continuity of the ego. The answer to this fear is the reactivation of the past or, expressed in psychodynamic terms, *a regression*. Descriptively, we may say that the soldier, threatened by the loss of his individuality in the namelessness of the Army, turns to his family with a greater need than he would were he not in the Army. What we call his *dependence* reassures him about the continuity of his emotional ties, and protects him against the sense of loss and the sense of insecurity. Letters, as well as the realistic continuation of the family life, as far as possible, turn him back to reality and diminish his tendency to regress. Many insecure young men became good soldiers because their wives could relieve them of their sense of loss and reassure them about the continuity of their relationship in this critical phase of adjustment.

But the emotional relationship of the soldier is no longer the same as his realistic "give and take" used to be in his civilian life. The soldier's memory, under the impact of his regressive needs, becomes amazingly selective. He soon forgets previous emotional conflicts within his family. He recalls all the little details that prove that he was loved. He feels that he is "the most beloved son" and forgets his jealousy of the kid-brother. He forgets his rebellion against his mother's possessive demands and restrictions; he remembers only that they meant a special appreciation of him as a capable and a lovable person. He does not remember his ambivalent, doubting relationship to his wife; he needs her love and remembers only the fact of her love for him. The soldier remembers and recalls only what he wants and needs to remember. This *idealization* is an important factor in his struggle against insecurity. He does not idealize the objects of his love alone but also idealizes himself and his relationships to his love-objects. He becomes the good son, brother, or husband who never quarreled or bickered, who never sulked or became irritated, who never shifted the responsibilities of fatherhood on to another. And in this way, the idealization frees him of guilty feelings and makes him a much freer receiver of love than he could be if he were still aware of all the negativistic feelings which he normally has.

One of the first lines of defense of the soldier is this idealiza-

tion of his emotional ties and with it an idealization of his home and himself. And it does not take too long to develop this attitude. A very young man, not long in Service, wrote home, "We want to come back to what we remember." And he implied that what he remembered was not the full reality. This idealization is a conserving process. While he is convincing himself that he will not change, he does not permit any change in the fantasy-picture of his love-object.

We cannot say that the emotional dependence on the home is much stronger in the younger than in the older inductees. Very often the younger man is more able to throw himself into the new environment in which he can indulge his independence and emancipation from home. He may adjust more quickly than the older man who, coming from an established routine of life, marriage and independence, is giving up more than the younger man. Therefore, as a recruit he may feel at a loss and he is usually very resentful. This is the reason that the wives who followed their husbands to army camps, knowing that they would see them but little, helped their husbands a great deal. That the wives appeared to need them so much gave the husbands a reassurance of their adult importance.

The selectiveness of the memory is the result of repression. One represses the disturbing features of the past, whether oneself or others were responsible for them. The repression of hostility and also of guilt not only eases one's conscience about the past; it also permits the soldier to take advantage of the exceptional situation of being in the Army. Thus, many become demanding and irresponsible toward their families or toward the community; they drink more heavily, they take liberties which they would not ordinarily take. Their conscience, as well as society's watchfulness, must close an eye, for they live in great insecurity and can never really know what the morrow will bring.

There are, of course, many thousands and thousands of soldiers who have not left the States and who, after the initial adaptation, did not need to face new and serious deprivations. There are also many whose economic and even social security improved during the Service, and who never needed to face a dangerous day. These men, of course, sometimes did exploit their freedom

from civilian conscience and created difficulties in their family relations. But the psychodynamics of these transformations and excesses are another story. Here we wish to emphasize that even under safe conditions, the soldier has to undergo deprivations and whenever the ego is deprived of accustomed gratifications, it will seek others; increased dependence upon the home is one form of reassurance, exploitation of the freedom in seeking immediate pleasures is another and both serve to enhance the strength of the ego for the mastery of insecurity and of fear.



Fear has many aspects and many degrees in the soldier's life. The unpredictability of the future, the inescapable submission to orders and the fear of the superiors represent chronic insecurities. This is quite different from the acute anxiety which the soldier experiences before action. And this, again, is different from the high-pitched emotional tension during action.

In battle the organism is overstimulated, perception is keen, coordination precise. "The battle is the pay-off"; this was the aim of all the preparation, of all the drill which made the reactions so automatic, so reliable that one functioned as if nothing else existed but the task and, for its sake, one could forget the danger and even death. A soldier writes from Africa (May 15, 1943): "Scared? Not for one minute. I was too busy to be scared."⁴ Works of art, paintings as well as photographs of action in war give the same impression: soldiers concentrated on following a flag, a symbol, their eyes fixed on a goal—those who fell out remain unnoticed, and appear as if they would not even wish to be noticed as long as their comrades did not reach the goal. In order to muster all energies for survival which is the individual goal, death has to be forgotten. "Nobody dies," the soldiers tell each other again and again while they walk on the shores of sunny Sicily, as we read in Harry Brown's "A Walk in the Sun." When we read of this in other war-fiction, too, we are apt to assume that it is merely the interpretation of the author. However, the soldiers themselves describe the sequence of their feelings in much the same way. The soldier

⁴ Mina Curtiss: *Letters Home*, Little, Brown & Company, Boston, 1944.

from Africa goes on to say, "We knew that we had lost some friends and equipment out on that field, but we have found that it is best to forget all about those friends, not to talk about them—they didn't even exist." The soldier in action cannot afford to be reminded of death; to think of the dead "buddy"; such realization could have only one effect in that situation: namely, the admission that he himself can be hit too—that he could be the next to die—the anxiety would become unsurmountable and paralyzing to further action.

All this shows how greatly overstrained is the ego's capacity to defend itself against anxiety, how much the ego may be spent in this struggle. And this is what finally accounts for the double orientation of the ego. While one is in actual danger of being killed, one has to isolate one's *real personality* from the danger; one has to feel that he is "just doing a job—his job."

If the capacity for such repression begins to be exhausted, the preoccupation with the dead "buddy" begins; this indicates the onset of the breakdown of the ego's defensive capacity. The anxiety that comes to the fore and floods the consciousness means: "this can happen to me, too." Some soldiers suppress the primary anxiety and mourn their own escape from death with feelings of guilt for the death of the other fellow. These soldiers develop a depressive state, unaware of their basic anxiety. However, they are just as unable to continue action as those whose anxiety—"this can happen to me, too"—appears with paralyzing frankness. Acute anxiety and depressive states are the most common forms of war neurosis (battle fatigue)⁵ However suddenly they seem to appear and abruptly disable the soldier, their acute manifestations are the result of the exhaustion of the ego's defensive capacity.



At this point we should recall that the psychological development of the individual is the result of the interplay between the two basic tendencies of emotional life: the erotic-loving and the destructive-hating tendencies. Thus the emotional balance of

⁵ Roy R. Grinker and John P. Spiegel: *Men Under Stress*, The Blakiston Company, Philadelphia, 1945.

every individual—in peace and in war—in civilian life or in the Army—depends upon the distribution of and relationship between these forces.

The soldier, frustrated in gratification of his need to love, has to deal with the increased tension of his hostile and aggressive impulses. Many psychiatrists found that those soldiers who broke down during their training did so because they could not adjust to this shift in their emotions, since in the Army the usual outlets for aggressive impulses are limited. Every group formation—and even more so in the Army—is based on a psychodynamic process for which it is imperative that the members of the group get along with each other; that is, the soldiers have to suppress from the beginning their dislikes and animosities toward each other in order to be able to identify themselves with each other. They have to suppress their negativistic attitudes toward their leaders, and at the same time, they have to submit to orders which they may regard as non-essential. To this is added the irritability which results from lack of privacy, from the loss of individual aspirations, and from all sorts of deprivations inherent in living in army-barracks. Criticism and ridicule give but limited discharge for the pent-up anger. “Griping” remains the main, or only, permitted outlet for dissatisfaction and hostile tension. It becomes finally a standardized emotional outlet, rather a manifestation of that individualistic “other ego” than of a real discharge of hatred.

Hatred, as we know, is the emotional accompaniment of the aggressive tendencies. Whom can, whom does the soldier hate? He is not allowed to hate his leaders; he cannot afford to hate the members of his group; he loves, more than ever, the members of his family. Does he hate the civilians, generally; does he hate those who remained home while he had to leave to fight the war? The sharp criticism which soldiers often voiced against civilians indicated a pent-up hostile tension; and one feared that this might easily be directed against the civilians. Yet the psychological significance of the soldier's criticism toward the home-front is not an expression of hatred alone. It is a much more complex emotion. He usually envied the civilian, but also expected him to do his utmost in order to help him to win the war

and come home. While in this respect he was impatient, his impatience expressed his admiration and almost limitless expectations of the potentialities of the home-front.

Does the soldier hate the enemy? Yes and no. The American soldier did not go to war with a ready-made set of concepts for hatred and, as we already indicated, he seemed to be reluctant in accepting indoctrination. His emotional attitude toward the enemy developed out of his individual experience, and was strongly influenced by his idea of fair play. The American soldier's tradition was to "make up his own mind" about people. Thus, he was apt to appreciate, even to admire, the achievement of the enemy. He accepted his virtues, his fighting qualities as the objective reality of the situation, by which he could appraise his own job. This changed only if the enemy used methods outside of the fair-play of war—and thus evoked a feeling of helplessness toward inhuman cruelty. His aversion to repay the enemy in kind taught him to hate. Such hatred, a primitive emotion, is different, in terms of psychodynamics, from the intellectual process achieved by indoctrination. Stemming from fear, such hatred makes revenge a hot, heartfelt desire. Through indoctrination, the political realities which led to war, its purpose and aim, become accepted as a part of one's ego-ideal. This stimulates action and endurance and diminishes the intensity of the emotional conflict over killing which might develop in those who acted in bitter emotionalism under the influence of individual hatred and impulse for revenge.

Whether indoctrination, individual hatred and revenge, or pure self-defense, or all of these together motivate the soldier's action in combat, killing in itself has its emotional repercussions for the individual. Religion and all other expressions of our culture imbued every individual with a deep appreciation of human life. Killing is *sin* to the real personality of the soldier. Those who kill from bombers or with artillery, mechanically firing at some mathematically determined place, have better possibilities to defend themselves against the psychological effects of killing than those who have to shoot at close range and/or have to act in person-to-person combat. However, even those who fire from a distance at targets invisible to them suffer a

breakdown of their emotional defenses, when situations arise in which the individuals could blame themselves for destruction and death as, for example, after they fired on civilians or missed the target, etc. Even greater is the danger for those who, as the foot-soldier, experienced death from much closer quarters. They kill personally, often man to man; they do it in self-defense and in defense of others, and still there are many ghastly and humiliating aspects of such actions which leave the soldier with an emotional conflict. They know what they want to forget.

Civilians find it surprising that soldiers do not answer their brusque but well-meant question, "How many Germans (or Japs) did you kill?" The soldier does not want to know or to remember. What appears to the civilian to be modesty about real heroism, for the soldier is the avoidance of a humiliating memory. With the killing he has to remember the fear he experienced and the threatening depth of his own emotions, so different from what he had been taught all his life. One medical officer, who served in Australia during the battle for Guadalcanal, said: "Several weeks after the battle two young Marine officers came to my station for rest. I invited them in for some drinks. They were two fine, clean-cut American boys—around twenty-two and twenty-four years old. They were nice and polite. We talked about the war and home, about their schools and their future plans. After a couple of drinks they changed, not in behavior, but in their looks. Their facial expressions became wild, those of "killers." A chill went down my back when I saw the horror in their glazed eyes, a mixture of rage and disgust."

These two young men could not talk about the battle, school, home, and future in one breath. What they wanted to suppress was not only the hostility and hatred they felt; even more they needed to forget their own anxiety and their own brutality experienced in the heat of battle. And in order to forget all this, they mustered all the repressing power of a strong and wakeful ego.

Alcohol, sleep, and even simple relaxation represent a threat in that after they have slackened the control of the ego, the suppressed will return, exposing the dangerous situation and all that

it implies. As long as the danger existed, those feelings were checked. The fear which mobilizes all means for survival shuts off those feelings which, should they enter the mind, would have paralyzing effects upon function. Even after the action is over, repression operates relatively well as long as the soldier lives in the same environment, together with the men who did as he did, who felt as he felt, who "know all about it." However, when the soldier is released from his group and stands alone among civilians, the memories of the inhuman hatred and humiliating fear which he felt and the recollection of what he did, or felt capable of doing, separates him, like a wall, from civilians. People who do not know about fear and killing appear to the combat-soldier like his past world of the Sunday-school. He tries not to take it too seriously, yet it affects him in such a way that his guilt-feelings creep up on him.

Does the soldier have reason to feel guilty? He went into the war with an absolution, he acted on orders and yet we find him struggling with guilty feelings all along. The motivation of his guilt originates in the psychological effect of the group morale which is somehow different from the civilian attitude. In the usual sense of our civilian society, soldiers are only rarely competitive with each other. Competition, only in rare instances, motivates the soldier's guilt-feelings. Rather, the mutual trust and confidence which they have for each other may stimulate their guilt.

Soldiers with a sense of responsibility often blame themselves for their fear. How often a soldier believes that nobody but himself was afraid! How often he feels ashamed and guilty because of his inefficiency! How many are troubled by doubts that their personal inefficiency and unwillingness, or their fear, might have endangered the group! Thus for a more compelling reason than competition the soldier measures himself: in a crucial situation will he live up to expectation? He may be aware of the conflict between his fear and his responsibility, and even if he is unaware of this, it may be the motivation of his developing combat fatigue.

An attitude of embarrassment and shyness may be the first indication that the soldier's emotional balance and relationship

to his group are disturbed. This behavior may be the first expression of a guilt which follows the realization that one wants to survive and wants to get away, not caring much for the others. This feeling might have been conscious even if the soldier did not give in to it, and if he survived his comrades he might develop a guilty feeling and a depression after the battle was over. Erich Maria Remarque, in "All Quiet on the Western Front,"⁶ describes with fine intuition the elation of survival, and how it became slowly mixed with the memories of the dead friends and the feeling of shame and guilt because he, himself, was alive. Finally he did not dare to visit the mother of the dead friend because he was afraid to face the resentment which, as he assumed, a mother necessarily would feel toward the one who survived whereas her son was killed. As if he would punish himself in order not to be punished by the mother's bitterness, he did not dare to enjoy his survival.



The topic of this chapter is not *war neurosis*. Yet we arrived at it in illustrating the psychodynamic processes activated by the adjustment to Army life. The capacity to adjust to new situations is a fundamental biological function of every organism. It is an energy-saving, economical principle which "enables the organism to react most rapidly to external changes."⁷ In human beings this goal is achieved through an unconsciously functioning, highly selective faculty which decides about the suppression of disturbing primary needs, about the selection of internal and external responses, and directs the psychic energy to the actual situation which represents the immediate task to be mastered. We call a person *adaptable* if—in spite of such internal work of suppression—he has enough energy left to apply to the external task and to master it or even gain pleasure and satisfaction from

⁶ Erich Maria Remarque: *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Little, Brown & Company, Boston, 1930

⁷ Franz Alexander *Our Age of Unreason*, J. B. Lippincott Company, New York, 1942

it. This satisfaction, in turn, helps to give new strength to the ego to handle its further work.

The soldier's adaptation to Army life is a task which begins when he is compelled to give up the gratifications of family life and to learn to live in barracks, to be a part of a group which, in pursuing its goal, may demand not only work and devotion but also his life. Thus, deprivation and insecurity, fear and aggression, as well as guilt feelings burden the emotional life of the soldier. But life in the Army also offers satisfactions which balance the exhausting demands. The soldier derives gratification from being a member of a group which secures protection and offers emotional compensation by the solidarity within the group. He learns skills which enhance his self-confidence as well as his prestige; he is (at least in many instances) endowed with a responsibility greater than he ever had before, and this again means stimulation and gratification for his ego. Generally speaking, as long as the gratifications of the ego match the expenditure of energy, the functioning capacity of the ego will be preserved.

Combat is not the only situation which is apt to upset the emotional balance of the soldier. A great variety of other frustrations may lead to the same effect. For example, it often happens that the given responsibility is not equal to the soldier's ambition or to his civilian prestige. Then his ego is faced with one of the greatest problems of adaptation—namely, to function without prestige and self-satisfaction. Or, as also happens often, the soldier is given a responsibility equal to his abilities and to his ambition, but not the rank that goes with it. Thus his ego is faced with the task of reconciling these painful contradictions, not only within himself, but also toward the external world which is impressed by rank. These and innumerable other deprivations may activate resentment against authority, unwillingness to further sacrifice, and other disturbing emotions which the soldier has to suppress again in order to keep a well-functioning balance. In this struggle the ego has to summon all, even the last, resources of the personality; it has to "scrape the barrel" in order to stand up under the strain. Therefore the idealization of the past, of one's self, and one's family and

friends; hence the idealization of the future, and the search for "personal war aims": something or somebody worth fighting for and worth coming back to. Thus what we call the *dependence of the soldier*, dependence on his home and on his loved ones, is not a simple regression; it is a sensitive instrument which maintains the balance in this struggle.

All this that we have discussed: the dependence, the identification, the double orientation, the idealization, and the struggle to ward off and master anxiety, are means of adaptation to Army life and in their final outcome they also may determine the soldier's capacity to adjust again to civilian life. However, the fate of the readjustment does not depend alone upon the experiences in the Army. The intensity of the conflicts mobilized by the demands of the Army and the mastery of those conflicts are determined only partially by the external reality; in an even greater degree they are the function of the total personality. This again can be described in terms of the individual's total development which accounts for such basic characteristics as *flexibility and adaptability*.⁸ The Army may expose some of its soldiers to long-lasting or often-repeated dangers and may try the individual's endurance endlessly; others may sit the war out on safe spots. Yet from the external situation alone, one cannot decide which individual's capacity to adaptation will be sooner exhausted. It has been proved by the study of neurosis in civilian and in army-populations that there is a breaking point for every individual; that everybody's adaptability can be exhausted and, if this occurs, anxiety and hostility may become free, causing neurotic manifestations. One cannot determine in a general way when this state of exhaustion will come. It does not necessarily occur on the height of physical and mental exertion. It frequently happens that the soldiers who stood up under long stress in the Army are overcome by neurotic symptoms only after they have returned home. For, if the adaptation to Army life impoverished the ego, spent its resources in the unremitting incessant struggle against fear and guilt, finally the ego may become unadaptable or rigid and then it may often break under the dis-

⁸ Franz Alexander: *Our Age of Unreason*, J. B. Lippincott Company, New York, 1942.

appointment, under the anticlimax which comes with his returning home.

Before we discuss the problems of returning we shall elaborate upon some of the developmental changes which are apt to occur under the influence of Army life.

Chapter 5

DEVELOPMENTAL INFLUENCES OF ARMY LIFE

Men of all walks and talks of life went in the Service and were welded into a great Army. They were of different ages, of different customs, and standards. They shared with each other the confines of military barracks and the limitless lonesomeness of foreign shores and oceans. Insight and vision, a wisdom which comes from understanding of man and one's self, is a gain which people will bring back from the war without being aware of it. Real maturation is the unconsciously reaped reward of those who mastered the task, who stood up under frustrations and succeeded in integrating their experiences. Every learning is painful, and costs energy. *Learning in the Army* has its specific strains and stresses; and not only those which come from deprivation and fear. Learning, development in the Army, is achieved under conditions and by methods which are different from the normal maturation in civilian life. Thus even the positive aspects of war-time experiences may represent a source of conflicts when the individual has to adjust again to civilian life. The balance sheet of adaptation to Army life, the individual's gain and loss, will depend on innumerable factors, such as his age, his previous experiences, his sexual development, family tradition and so on; it will depend not only upon his experiences while in the Army, but also upon the realities of the civilian life to which he returns.

Young men of various temperaments, at different stages in their emotional and psychosexual development, went into the Services at the age of eighteen. They are separated from their families; they become free of supervision of the home and of the conflicts inherent in their specific family situations. They

become emancipated in many respects and enjoy a freedom while they become a part of the Army organization in which discipline has another meaning. Adjustment to discipline in the Army is psychologically meaningful, not only for the youngest soldiers, but also for the man older in years. It exposes all of them to new identifications; it demands from them new habit formations, different from what they learned before. There are too many aspects of this learning to account for here, even in the most superficial way. Some of them appear useless to the soldier, others have great importance for his existence in the Army and for his future, too. Whether he realizes this or not he cannot evade learning. The Army drills its men (under high pressure) until the skill has become an automatic response. Some of those, however useful they were in the Army, may be superfluous and disturbing in their civilian existence; others may remain a useful part of their equipment for life. The Army conveys a habit of living from which men, even if they would want to, cannot escape. Many thousands acquired cleanliness and dietary habits for which they had not been trained previously. Thousands of illiterates first learned to read and write in the Army schools. The censors would watch the progress from an illiterate scrawl to a personal handwriting and one censor tells of his own interest in observing the intensity with which a soldier was trying to make his new experiences a part of himself and thus to send a part of himself to the girl back home. And the censor wondered whether his girl in the backwoods would fear that the soldier's new ability would eventually estrange him.

Such a concern was, in many instances, justified. Many social workers, working with the lowest income groups, have already reported disagreements in families because the veteran had become accustomed to a better body-hygiene altogether, to a better standard of living than his wife or mother could or was able and willing to provide. Of course, many, many thousands also acquired—extra-curricularly, so to speak—tastes and habits which appear offensive to their families of cultivated manners. Many wives and mothers will find it hard to live with habits of language and other behavior to which the soldier became accustomed in the Army. What is a refinement for one stratum of

the population may appear to be a crude deterioration for others—for the Army is a great leveler. It evens personal differences in more than one way.



One of the factors which tends to accelerate the maturation of the individual is that in the Army age does not play the same role as it does in civilian life. A sailor who was the youngest in his outfit wrote, "When I stop to think about it, it does seem a little strange to be working with and going around as a complete equal with men with whom, merely because of the age difference, I would hardly ever talk, under civilian circumstances." And in a similar vein, "It sometimes is odd to see the older men taking orders from the youngsters and it is even more surprising that there is very little friction on this basis." In civilian life, school and progress in life depend on age, from year to year a young man's standing is measured by age. In the Army, not the age, but the rank counts. A young man is given power and responsibility in greater degree than he would have had in civilian life. The older men accept this and often, especially in the beginning, they have sympathy for "that kid" who has to go through the hardships that they, the older men, barely can stand. After a while they learn to expect the young men not only to be able to do what is assigned to them, but to do it more easily or better than the older men. Thus age loses its reliability as a measure of achievement and responsibility. It is obvious that this affects the young men's attitude not only while they are in the Army but that it also will influence their civilian readjustment within the family and in their community.

The young man in the Army becomes *independent* in many ways. He is earning his own living, he is far away from the family, and if he is good in his work, he achieves an independence through this success. This will be quite a surprise for many an authoritative father. More than one boy taught his father a lesson. One airplane-mechanic wrote home, "There was a statement in your letter, Dad, that went as follows, 'You will appreciate all your life this period of being told everything you have to do.' I hope to change your ideas. We're in the Air

Corps, we are full-fledged airplane mechanics, we are specialists and a spoiled bunch, but by God, we are our own bosses; and what we say goes. That is, in our own little kingdom, our plane. Each one of us has a plane and that man alone is responsible for that ship. I, a lousy little corporal, can tell a four-star general that he can't fly my plane. . . . It is mine. . . . I take the responsibility of the ship, and of the pilot's life. . . . It's all expected of us and there is no more said."¹ The young man has learned to take responsibilities and to grow up to them. For in many ways the experiences of the Army life are stimulating; they enrich the soldier not only with learned skills but also with the deep gratification of achievement and prestige.

Living together in the non-privacy of military life, the topics of conversation also pass over the barriers of age differences. The young men listen to the older men's troubles and worries. When the older men are lonesome for their wives, the younger ones are stimulated in their own longings for women and feel nostalgic for the wife they do not have. Identification with the older men is easier than in civilian life because the older man accepts the younger one as an equal. What he learns by these identifications, of course, are not always those attitudes which are considered desirable by his civilian family, but he reasons, "It is just too bad if the home folks don't like it." This may be an expression of real maturation or merely of a sham-independence.

As his real maturation grows, the soldier's insight and *critical attitude toward the Army* as well as toward civilian life develop. While in the Army the soldier feels that his criticism of the Army or of the home-front is effectless. In "griping," however, the soldier "lets off steam." He nourishes this form of his self-expression, comforting himself with the hope that his criticism will be effective when he returns to civilian life. Actually, soldiers (especially young soldiers) have an exaggerated belief in the omnipotence of the veteran. This appears to be a contradiction of our observations which convinced us of the insecurity and inferiority feeling of the individual vet-

¹ Mina Curtiss: *Letters Home*, Little Brown & Company, Boston, 1944.

eran toward civilian society. Nevertheless, this contradiction can be easily explained on the basis of the soldier's psychology, as an expression of his double personality. Helpless and deprived of his free-will in the Army, he continues his real personality in his fantasy by fostering all manifestations of his individual freedom.

Soldiers complain often about their lost years. However, many observations indicate that young men in the Army, separated from those upon whom they used to depend for emotional and intellectual stimulation, gained an independence in thinking. It is amazing how many soldiers became good letter-writers and revealed in their letters a greater sensitivity, a keener insight into their own emotions and into the happenings around them. In their great desire to participate in the life from which they are temporarily excluded, the young men re-evaluate many of their previous experiences and attitudes in the light of their present situations and fears. They fantasy about undoing whatever they did wrong, they are anxious to make up for lost time. They are desirous of holding on to what they learned; they think of their school as a part of the home; they idealize it and criticize it. Many of the high school boys kept in touch with their favorite teachers; many of the college boys wrote letters to their Alma Maters informing the deans about the moods and attitudes of the youth in the Army, advising the school about programs for the veterans. In letters to schools or in letters and articles to magazines, high school and college students voiced their opinions, evaluating the virtues and criticizing the defects of their schools. These letters revealed not only the soldier's pent-up desire to be active in directing his future, but also an actual maturation which will have stimulating effects on our social and educational institutions.

Many observers may assume that all we have said applies only to the exceptions, to the "intellectuals." They base their objections, justifiably, upon newspaper and radio accounts which show that at the ending of the war many veterans were reluctant to take advantage of the educational opportunities provided in the G. I. Bill of Rights. Does this mean that they did not mature as we described? To many soldiers and vet-

erans, school represents the regimentation of their childhood and having had enough of it in the Army, their desire for independence is so great that they do not wish to go back to school, in the same way as they do not wish to go back to being children. Those who had not gone beyond the grades, or the first years of high school, are especially apt to see it this way. Some resent the pressure put upon them to take advantage of their "rights." In this pressure they sense the civilian's "we know best what's best for you" attitude, and they become defensive about it. All the time, while they were in the Army, they hoped for and fantasied a "freedom" in which they would be their own masters. Thus, now they want to find out for themselves what is the best for them. Some observers, in evaluating this attitude, may find that the veteran is not mature enough to follow a plan which was thought out for him. This is just one manifestation of the fact that he cannot meet the demands of civilian life unhesitatingly or achieve his goal directly. But could this have been expected?

Emotional maturation is a complex process and has many aspects. Even under the usual civilian conditions, we can observe the uneven and unbalanced growth of the various parts of the personality. Some individuals develop intellectually and remain emotionally undeveloped, dependent and unable to love. Others become quickly self-reliant and emotionally giving, yet their intellectual capacities may grow slowly and their intellectual interests may be limited. How much more we should be prepared to expect such unbalance of the personality in the men whose emotional maturation was influenced by Army life. We pointed out that the Army accelerates some aspects of the ego development. However, this is paid for dearly.



Under normal circumstances, the ego development of a young man goes hand in hand with his psychosexual development. While he goes to school or while he works in business, in the factory or on the farm, he has opportunity to adjust his relationship to the other sex. He has girls as companions all the time; he is also in steady contact with the women in his

family. *The Army life affects the psychosexual development* of the young man in two ways. One is the actual absence of girls; this is immediate and the response to this lack of heterosexual companionship is conscious. The other influence is insidious, and is slowly and unconsciously effective. Living only with men in such close quarters is a threat to the not yet well-entrenched heterosexuality of the late-adolescent.

The following example will illustrate this point: A young man of nineteen, who was at the height of his first, deeply romantic love when the first World War broke out, was called immediately to duty and he soon became a prisoner of war. He spent over three years in a prison camp and during this time he did not see a woman; he rarely received a letter; he, as well as his fellow-prisoners, was cut off from the world. He observed closely his fellow prisoners' struggle with their sexual needs. He felt repulsed by his observations, and although he developed some close and lasting friendships with some of the prisoners, he never could permit any sexual closeness, be it even the slightest physical demonstration of affection. Yet, years later, dreams of homosexual content revealed the depth of those impressions. When the war was over and he returned from the prison camp, he found that the girl whom he loved had married. Disappointed and oppressed by inferiority feelings, he felt unworthy of being loved and unable to love. The analysis revealed that his neurotic inhibition was due not so much to concern over this disappointment in love as it was the result of the chronic suppression of all sexual impulses because of his fear of homosexuality. This man, whose ambition was indomitable, did not develop what one would call a war neurosis. He kept secret his humiliation in the sexual sphere and concentrated all his energies upon achieving success. It was only after he was an established and successful business man that he felt secure enough to permit himself to be concerned about his sexual neurosis.

The young man invests a great deal of his psychosexual energy—*libido*—in his emotional attachments within the Army. He likes and dislikes members of the group; similarly he likes and dislikes his superiors and—what is important—he is very eager to be liked and accepted by them. Spending his psycho-

sexual energy among men stimulates his homosexual tendencies. These may be expressed only in dreams, or they may cause severe anxieties and neurotic reactions. Against this danger the best defense is the activation of heterosexuality. In deeds and in fantasies, the men have to reassure themselves that their sexuality is intact. Hence, the young men talk as much or even more about sex than the older men do. Nobody wants to be left out and those who were too young or too shy to have had sexual relationships, before they entered the Army, will confabulate in order to be on a par with the others. The sexual desire, as a physiological need, naturally becomes much stronger under such stimulation.

The young man is under the pressure of various tendencies. He wants to be a man, similar to those who represent maturity to him, but at the same time he feels insecure and dependent; hence his desire to transfer his dependence from the mother to a girl, to a woman whom he can marry. Marriage is the solution of his physiological and emotional needs. Marriage protects the soldier from the realization of his dependence upon his mother; it elevates him from being only a son to the rank of a married man—as so many of the men in his group are. Thus, marriage would satisfy the need to belong to somebody, to be important to a woman not as a son but as a husband, the one man whom the girl, the beloved, selected from many. This need to be recognized as a sexual individual is urgent. His insecurity and his ever-present feeling that his time is limited combine to increase his emotional tension. This emotional constellation—the need for the reassurance which comes from sexual gratification and from the feeling of belonging to someone—does not leave time for the young soldier to postpone marriage until after he has pondered over the wisdom of it.

Sexual gratification can be a general antidote for any sort of frustration. This is not a comfortable generalization but a physiological fact, for sexual orgasm and sexual discharge have a function of releasing the organism from even such tensions which do not originate in sexual desire itself. The soldier, having to master so much tension, frustration and deprivation, finds consolation in sexuality. He cannot afford to wait to find his

ego-ideal who may enrich his personality by satisfying his need for romantic love. Any girl who responds appears satisfactory; for, the soldier's need for love originates in his dependence and in his immediate need for security.

In respect to the psychosexual development of many (but, of course, not all) young men, the Army life adds up to this: sexuality may become a goal in itself—the consolation and the gratification of pent-up needs and tensions. The woman who is the partner often is regarded as no more than just an instrument of gratification. Not only is the woman depreciated, but also the function of sexuality and love itself. And through this he depreciates his own personality because he was not able to achieve a higher degree of emotional gratification in sexual experience. This is disillusioning and it leaves deep scars on the man's emotional life and may impair his capacity to love. Although such impaired capacity to love does not always represent an acute neurosis in the same sense as war neurosis, yet psychiatric experience for many years to come will deal with men and women who developed neurotic aberrations in the sexual sphere on account of the war.



It is *the function of fantasy* to build the bridge between the past and the future. In a general way we described how it functions for the soldier: fantasies carry him from his idealized past, through his hard, depriving reality to his imagination of a future in which he will become able to realize his own wishes, his own destiny. Fantasy is a function of the mind which prepares the individual for the future. It is like setting a stage to rehearse what later will be acted in reality, in order to be prepared. Everybody knows how one tries out in his mind, as it were, how he will respond to and overcome an unpleasant situation; for example, how he will act in an examination or in an interview for a job, or even on the battlefield. In this way one musters and collects one's courage and masters the fear. Fantasy also creates a foretaste for pleasant events, sometimes with such an intensity that the fantasy itself is already a partial fulfilment of desires and wishes. Thus one may depict in one's

mind how one will embrace one's wife, how one will sit down to the first dinner at home, as well as plan every detail of the "dream house" wherever and whenever it will be realized. Fantasies build up the ego so that the dreamer feels strong enough to meet every situation he cares to be prepared for; fantasies also build up the other individual, be he loved or hated, to the person whom one wants him or her to be. Fantasies become stereotyped during long separation, since then they cannot be matched against reality. They may become so tightly woven that they become rigid, unchangeable. People with such unpliable fantasies cannot change their attitude toward the content of the fantasy, and they will be unable to accept reality should it turn out to be different from what they imagined.

The following case history may illustrate this point. This was a young soldier who was severely wounded in the Italian campaign after two years' service overseas. He was treated in the surgical ward of a general hospital and from there was given a furlough to visit his home. Ten days later he was brought back in a psychotic state. After he arrived home he found out that the girl whom he loved had married somebody else. When the psychiatrist probed into the history of this relationship, it became obvious that this love was not only one-sided, but that it existed only in his fantasy. He was a shy and inhibited farm boy who had never expressed his love to the girl of his dreams. While he was overseas he corresponded with another girl of his home community, expressing to her those feelings which he actually wanted to but could not tell to the beloved girl. The girl with whom he exchanged letters was there waiting for him; he, however, could not transfer his feelings to her. Since actually he could not love anyone, he went into a manic rage, flailing around himself and repeating sadly, "they don't understand; they don't understand." No doubt this man was deeply inhibited in his heterosexual feelings, even before he went into the Army. Whatever the motives of his inhibitions were, he could not love a woman in the reality. However, the fantasy-love deceitfully nourished by the correspondence with another girl, served him well while he was overseas. It made him similar to other men; he obtained almost as much satisfaction from his

fantasy as other men had from a real but interrupted relationship with their wives and sweethearts. They had memories embellished and selected to fit their needs, and he, too, had that. And something more as well in his fantasies he overcame his shyness and felt equal to the other men; thus he prepared himself to meet the girl as a man. When he found her married and realized that his preparations were in vain, he became also aware that he would not have been able to live up to his own fantasies. Externally he could save face by blaming the girl for his disappointment. He could even offer this as a rationalization to the members of his family for the fact that he felt so unhappy at home. Inside of himself, however, he knew that he was ashamed of and angry at no one but himself, since he fooled himself with his fantasy. When the fantasy could not stand the reality of life at home, there remained for him nothing but self-hatred and loneliness.

The same elements of fantasy which make up this sad but true story were built into a witty play in Norman Krasna's "Dear Ruth." They are repeated many times in reality, creating conflicts which often lead to the psychiatrist's office. A young married woman had quite a hard time in adjusting to her marriage with her officer-husband. By chance, she had to write a business letter to a bomber pilot overseas. Somehow she wrote this letter with more of an individual note than usual. The young soldier in Africa, hungry for any contact with a woman, answered and a correspondence developed, becoming more and more ardent. The young officer overseas and the young woman at home filled each other's need for fantasy, for romance. Then he became a prisoner of war and the correspondence was interrupted. She and her husband experienced the hardships of real separation when he was sent to the Pacific theater of war. Now the young woman wrote ardent letters to her husband and concentrated her loyalty and love in waiting for him. The war with Germany won, the prisoner of war returned, unprepared for disappointment, as his wire from the port of debarkation indicated. How real was the disillusionment in this completely unrealistic love! He was deeply disturbed when he received a letter "explaining everything." He felt a deep sense of loss

when he had to give up his love of a woman whom he had never met.

To be cheated by a fantasy is as bad, or almost as bad, as to be cheated by reality; and in some sense even more so, since the fantasy is built up mainly by one's self. One clings to the fantasy so tenaciously since with it one clings to a part of one's self—to that part of one's self which one held in such high esteem whenever the hardships of war threatened the ego. These two people probably never would have fallen in love with each other had they really met. This woman was older, their cultures, their ways of living were so different that real life would never have brought them together. But it is hard to reason with a fantasy which could support one during sixteen months of imprisonment, even without letters. It was actually his will to survive which used this fantasy as a support by holding out a goal. That he created it all himself was a humiliating fact which he could accept only after psychiatric treatment.

There are, and were, many such self-built loves, imagined by the men to support their morale against the lonesomeness in war. Such loves satisfy different needs in different people—needs which were acute in war-time conditions and may disappear with peace-time adjustment. Fantasy played a greater role for a longer time in the relationship between men and women during the war than it did in normal times. It idealized the woman, especially the woman back home. In contradiction to this, war-time experiences were apt to lead to *depreciation of sexuality* and of women. This distinction between the "good woman" and the "bad woman" is one of the most important effects of war upon the sexuality of man.

Did they who established the "institution of the pin-up girl" know about this? Probably not. They did not evaluate the often almost tragic importance of the sweet and painful tension of the individual fantasy which is not revealed completely even in letters to *her*, to the ideal object of the fantasy, they did not evaluate the difference between this and the playful drainage of erotic tension in the communal fantasies about the pin-up girl. Yet, what becomes almost universally popular must have a meaning for the emotional economy.

Men of all ages, younger men more so than the older men, have the unconscious urge to reassure themselves about their erotic interests in women. Probably, each one of them has with him the picture of a woman whom he loves or would want to love. But such a picture, if it should fulfil its romantic function, rather isolates its owner in the group than makes him a part of it. Of course, the soldiers show the photographs of their loved ones, they will even mutually comment on them, but in a way which indicates to each other that they are aware of talking about sacred issues. This does not help to release the erotic tension but actually increases the longing in each of them. It is different with the pictures of the pin-up girl. This brings the woman within the range of the senses, but she is not a "sacred issue"; she does not belong to any one, she belongs to all. She can be criticized and she can be praised; she can be voted upon; she becomes the object of a playful outlet for heterosexual fantasy in which everyone can indulge. Its significance is that everybody can participate in this play without individual responsibility and guilt-feeling; for nobody is apt to indulge in it alone, nor to be too eager to see "the real thing"; no one expects and no one is expected to fall in love with her and change the communal feeling to an individual one.

The most beautiful pin-up girl has less and a completely different value in the emotional life of the soldier than a letter from a "girl back home," or from any girl. For any attention from a woman adds significance to him as an individual, enhances his ego-feeling, and by this it distinguishes him within the group. But every such satisfaction puts some responsibility upon him. His increased longing or homesickness may be painful, even his fantasy has consequences for his future—as we have shown. Only the pin-up girl, about whom they can joke and laugh together, remains without individual consequence. Thus, one can benefit without being burdened by this limited and communally accepted erotic stimulation. Yet, it has again more significance than just this. It brings the men within the group closer together, it levels their individualistic tastes and evens their attitudes toward sex and by this it diminishes the importance of love, of this most painfully missed gratification during

war. The pin-up girl does not add to the idealization of woman. Rather the opposite, and this is its function: in their great need for and dependence upon woman, men would feel too inadequate to approach the unknown and idolized woman. The pin-up girl, unattainable and belonging to all, brings the woman closer to the soldier, and by presenting all the time an ideal of beauty, health and attractiveness, it keeps the level of the soldier's expectations much higher than the one to which soldiers turn for sexual release.



Young men often misjudge the solaces of sex for love and for masculine maturity, for it seems to deny their dependence. The older men, those who had well-established heterosexual relationships before they entered the Army, have a much better chance to survive the Army without a chronic disturbance of their psychosexual personality. For them, too, the Army brings a mobilization of repressed homosexual impulses. However, these impulses have less importance since their egos have the reassurance of the established relationship. The usually better integrated, more mature ego is able to fight off the disconcerting emotional reactions. Moreover, the men who are married do not need to fight against their emotional dependence on their wives and children in the same way as the unmarried man tries to deny his dependence on the mother. For the satisfactorily married man, dependence has a different emotional context. It is expressed by sexual needs and erotic desires toward his wife and is interwoven with the memories of their love; it is also paralleled by a similar emotional dependence of his wife, who with every letter brings him reassurance of his masculinity.

Although the married man has a much better emotional position in handling his sexual deprivation, this does not mean that his fantasies and wishes will all the time faithfully return to his wife, and to her alone, throughout the separation. It does mean, however, that the immediate gratification of physical sexual needs will not necessarily interfere with his love as it was established in his marriage, for the man in the Army lives with a double consciousness—while the actual frustration demands

sexual release, both the deprivation and its gratification may be isolated and belong to his war-time ego only. He usually hopes, and in many cases his hopes are well founded, that his war-time unfaithfulness will be forgotten after he returns to his wife.

Society has always been willing to condone the sexual activities of the soldier; it looks upon them as "normal" and permissible compensations and on a par with his drinking and gambling. It regards them all as necessary to give the soldier release from tension. The soldier himself, although he freely uses these emotional narcotics, does not feel completely well about them. This is true especially for men of high ego-ideals and strict up-bringing. While they ward off the anxiety and tension inherent in the actual situation, they often become worried about their behavior. They feel guilty for their sexual activities as well as for their drinking and gambling. This internal conflict increases their emotional tension which may again lead to more drinking and gambling. Thus a vicious circle arises, ending in habit formation. What originally appeared to the soldier as a manifestation of his masculine maturity turns against him. In his internal struggle against his conflicts, he will finally exhaust his adaptive faculties.

We began this chapter by describing the process of growth and maturation which Army life offers to the soldiers and ended by describing neurotic manifestations which may eventually lead to a rigid and unadaptable personality. Actual maturation is the result of a balance between the expenditure of energy for the tasks which the ego has to master and the intake of energy in the form of love and gratification. In the Army, more often than not, the soldier expends more of his energies than he can absorb in love—he lives on his capital and often exhausts his resources. Thus, even if the Army stimulates the individual's development, the process of maturation often becomes disturbed. What began as a normal self-assertion may become an exaggerated conceit; what began as love may turn to a selfish demand. However, the soldier tries to hold on to love in order to remain a person capable of loving; by the time he returns, his capacity to love is usually undermined. What we call *readjustment* to civilian life actually means recovery of this faculty.

Chapter 6

THE EMOTIONAL SITUATION AT RETURNING

There is no "typical returning serviceman" and there is no "typical returning." Although the soldiers generally believe that returning home is their unquestionable and imperative desire, yet their emotional attitude, once home again, is much more conflictful than it was at the time of separation. Whereas going to war has generally the same implications for everybody, returning to civilian life has a different meaning for every soldier since it means that he has become an individual again.

The time of returning and the reasons which brought it about play an important role in determining the circumstances which the veteran will face. We have already had enough opportunity to observe the differences in the emotional attitudes of the veteran, depending upon whether he came home at the beginning of the war as a physical or psychiatric casualty never having seen battle, or later during the war, having gone through the hardships of battles; whether he came home a decorated hero or from a prison camp; whether he had to "sit the end of the war out" until he collected enough points in some desk job; or whether he was retained in hospital at the time when everybody came "marching home."

Not only he himself but also the members of his family and of his community are affected by the conditions of his returning. And the soldier's own response to his family, his friends and his community was itself again influenced by the nature of the acceptance which he met. A veteran feels differently toward the brother who treats him as a hero and recognizes his achievement than he does toward the brother who ignores him and acts with superiority on the basis of his own civilian achievements.

Generally, we may say that the civilian responded with a sense of secure, benevolent superiority toward the veteran when he came home as a single, rather defeated individual. Towards the end of the war when soldiers returned in large groups, one could observe the civilians' envy, fear and guilt.

Beyond these sociologically determined responses, every veteran *struggles unconsciously for integration of his Army experiences*, since he can become civilian again only after he has incorporated them as a part of his personality, only after he has "lived it down" so that it may not disturbingly interfere with his further development. This, of course, is not necessary for the professional soldier. His life is planned in the frame of the military machinery. And he does not have to plan further, since he does not face a new, basic adjustment after the war; his family life has also been adjusted to this scheme. There were also soldiers in the enlisted Army who succeeded in adapting to the Army and on returning they realize that they "liked it too well," that they would rather stay in the Army than make an effort for a new adaptation to civilian life. Their adjustment will be consequently affected, for they may have not only little desire, but also little reserve of flexibility which should enable them to make a new adaptation successfully. The numerous reenlistments prove this point.

In many ways the readjustment to civilian life is more difficult than was the adjustment to the Army. There is no large prepared machinery with strict but determined rules and with well-thought-out training. The civilian is taught how to become a soldier, but the soldier is not taught how to become a civilian again. As long as the men were in the Army they felt very strongly about such statements as this. They were convinced that they did not need to be taught. They thought they would be civilians with the change of their clothes. And this conviction did not originate in the depreciation of the civilian status but rather in the opposite. They relied so strongly upon the effectiveness of their desire to remain civilians, they longed for the returning to what they could remember so intently, that for them, as they felt it, it was not a case of "becoming" civilian, but of "being" one. Thus the soldier does not notice how far

away from his past he has developed, until he comes back and faces the old situation with his present personality.

A young college graduate, an artistically inclined and sensitive man, enlisted in the Air Force at the beginning of the war. His choice of service was motivated by the desire to serve his country and yet not to be personally involved in killing. He succeeded in becoming a bomber pilot and was in the Pacific in the early phases of the war. After he completed his missions he was sent home. He said: "I learned to fly, but not I, not my whole self, did the flying. I kept myself apart, as though saving myself from those experiences. I expected to step out and find myself again with all my interests in poetry and sociology. When I arrived home I found out that it was different; what my family was talking about, in spite of our mutual understanding, did not interest me; or it may be that I don't know what they talk about, don't share their fervor, I don't feel a part of it." How great was his disillusionment! He had fostered the past in himself in order to allow it to become his future; expecting that the years in the service would be just an interlude, but he was mistaken. Slowly his military life took a greater part of his personality than he knew. He did not realize this as long as he was among those who lived the same life. Then his civilian tastes, habits and dreams appeared to distinguish him from the others in the group. He realized his own change only when he measured himself against those at home who appeared unchanged to him, because they changed only with the direction and the tempo of civilian development, from which he was taken out. And he did not feel up to par! He felt rather shy and inferior. His friends admired him, but he himself did not feel a better person or a hero just because he flew over the Pacific to Japanese targets. Why not? Because it was not the family and friends who disappointed him; he was disappointed in himself. He did not expect the others to be bomber pilots, but he had fostered the illusion that he remained the same person as he was when he enlisted; that he would fill the same place in his civilian group which he left years ago. This is just one example of the observation that the soldiers live in a double world with two sets of values. After he returned our pilot expected him-

self to fit into his civilian ego immediately. He could not do this and felt embarrassed about his inadequacy. Not only did he find that he had not preserved his civilian individuality, but also he was surprised that he so often had to think of himself back in New Guinea. These thoughts disturbed his relationships with his friends. During political discussions he often thought, "We," meaning the soldiers, "do not talk about the war." He felt embarrassed as if telling himself, "The other fellows are still fighting the war and here I am talking politics." He lived again in two worlds as he had while with his unit—only now he appreciated the values of his Army life and felt separated from the values and habits of his civilian life.

One may perhaps believe that these reactions occur only in such intellectual and introspective young men as this pilot was. However, this is not so. It is quite common that the returning soldier is surprised by a sudden realization of an insecurity which he feels in relation to his new environment, which used to be his home. He is exposed once more to an interruption of the continuity of his emotions and his surprise may amount to a shock. While he realizes that his position is now reversed he asks himself, "*Home is where?*"

An officer, about thirty years of age, spent two years overseas in non-combatant, but responsible, capacity. He returned on rotation to spend a vacation in his parent's home. He was in no sense a casualty. In a friendly conversation, however, he said, "I knew that being home would be an anti-climax, but what surprised me so painfully was that at home I became anxious. I felt the same kind of anxiety which I used to feel in my adolescent years." What does this mean? Why did his home activate in him not the self which he was when he left, but a long-forgotten part of his personality—that which he wanted to outgrow and forget? In the Army he was an adult, responsible for his job only to his superiors, who respected him. At home he felt as if, surrounded by the demands of his mother, he would become a child again. How keenly, and painfully, he remembered this aspect of his childhood now. He certainly did not think of it as long as he was away. While he enjoyed his successful position he could afford to long for home, for the

love which originally delayed his development. However, his growth, his adulthood was not completely integrated in his personality. As if he himself could not quite believe in it yet, he felt threatened by a return to his adolescent attitudes under the atmosphere of home. He had to defend himself against such regression. He did this by spending much time visiting friends away from his home. Some months later he married and thus entered a relationship which did not contest but rather recognized his adulthood.

One may object, saying that we have described the reactions of highly sensitive individualists rather than the behavior of the large mass of returning soldiers. Yet these reactions do not represent such exceptional incidents as one would like to believe.

It is known now that veterans usually are not planning to go back to the jobs they left, if they do, it is often a compromise with reality which did not give them another choice. In many cases the veterans soon leave the jobs to which they returned. Analyzing the emotional motivations beyond the obvious sociological factors, we may find that, denuded of the protection of his Army group, the veteran faces his past, his connections and relationships alone; and this mobilizes many conflicts in him. He may feel envy and resentment toward those who were home while he was away in the Army; he may even realize that he feels too shy to meet their overtures toward him. Yet beneath, he struggles within himself. While he was away he fostered and idealized his past, himself, his family and his connections. They had an idealized meaning for him, established by his fantasy. After returning he faces the same persons in reality with the eyes of his present personality, and in some, although to a very greatly mitigated degree, he feels like the soldier who went home and found his dream girl married to another fellow. He, too, feels duped by his fantasies. This in itself represents a trauma to a man who, returning from the war in expectancy of his masculine maturation, has to realize that the world, the people at home and at his working place are not as he imagined them. He measures them by and in his fantasies and feels that he fooled himself. He fooled himself because of his dependence, because he could not stand the aloneness, and now he blames

himself for his fantasies, finding them childish and unrealistic. He feels humiliated and wants to become more realistic. He hates himself for his weakness and becomes very critical of himself and others. Of course, the people do not live up to his fantasy expectations.

The measuring of the values and standards of civilian and Army life began when he left for the Army; he achieved a partial adjustment between them while he was in the service; and at homecoming the process repeats itself by its own laws of emotional dynamics leading either to successful development or to neurotic manifestations. Thus we may generalize that the returning soldier undergoes a period of emotional unbalance, the psychodynamic motivations of this "off-balance" are similar to those which the veteran experienced at the beginning of his Army life.



At the time of his induction he could not invest his emotions in his new environment for quite some time. His emotions were left at home and he was bored in the Army and not interested in his task. He could easily forgive himself for this. He did not owe any emotion in the Army to anybody at that early phase of his military life. *At his return, however, he is troubled when he feels unable to love his wife, his children and his friends.* He cannot understand why and he cannot forgive himself for this. He feels unable to be as happy as he wanted to be and he cannot understand this difference between his fantasy and his reality, either. In his fantasy he promised himself all joy at home, much pleasure in giving and in receiving, and he suddenly realizes that he cannot give and cannot take as anticipated. He cannot feel satisfaction. He reproaches himself for his emotional emptiness and he feels guilty about it, but he cannot help it. The more he becomes aware that his behavior disappoints and hurts his family, the greater becomes his emotional tension. He is surprised and often even ashamed to find how desirable the Army appears to him after his return, when he is unable to love his family.

An officer, father of two children, described this lack of feel-

ing toward his children vividly. "Before I left," he said, "I took them for granted. They were a part of my life. Now I have to look for my feelings. I have to search for them and therefore they become so important; everything has to be expressed, to reassure me that I love them." His complaint expresses articulately what many veterans feel when they are unable to continue in reality the emotions which were alive in the past, and seemed to be just as alive in fantasy. This disappointment about the lack of feelings is so great that the veteran impatiently tries to create them. Thus an exaggerated, ungentle emotional attitude develops which usually is disturbing to those people who used to have simple, genuine reactions and are unaccustomed to define their feelings. They suffer from a sense of frustration, in spite of their efforts to "prove" their love.

If the individual is as introspective as this father, then he blames himself for his lack of feelings. But people with less insight, and these are in the great majority, will not be able to explain to themselves their frustration; they will blame someone else for it, usually those who made the effort to make him welcome at home, who want to demonstrate the feeling which he is unable to return. The following incident, which probably did not occur as frequently as it was reported, is often cited as an example of the unaccountable unforgiveness of the returning soldier: His family had saved red points for a long time to serve a steak dinner for the soldier-son; when he saw the juicy steak he shouted angrily, "This is how you live!" and abruptly got up and walked away from the table—and from home. He blamed his family for their giving because he was too disturbed to receive. This probably is an extreme case, but a reaction similar to this makes a good device whereby the unsure soldier can threaten the civilian by making him aware of the gap which existed between civilians and soldiers—and which gap the veteran feels within himself at his return.



Civilians were advised in newspaper and magazine articles not to pry into the memories of the veterans. Such advice should

not be taken too literally. It has happened, probably more than once, that a well-meaning father has said to his son, "I know you won't want to talk, so just——," and at this point he has been interrupted cheerfully, "Hell, I don't want to talk! Never in my life did I have so many interesting things to tell you." There are many soldiers who will want to talk immediately after they return, and talking will become easier for those who come back later, when the memories of war, of fear and pain are no longer so oppressing. The stories of the soldiers of this war will mellow with time and will be good to tell to one's children and grandchildren. It has always been that way and the veteran today is not completely different in this respect from soldiers of other wars. He had many experiences which he would like to publicize and many others which he would rather forget. In letters never written he told many details of his experiences which he tried to etch into his memory with the intention of telling "all about it" whenever he would be relaxed again in the circle of his family. This time may come; yet, immediately upon returning his feelings and recollections are confused. His memory has not yet had time to select those which are good for him to tell and those which would upset him. He still lives on a very limited margin of emotional freedom.

Confused between his two worlds, between his civilian and military self, the veteran is startled. He appears withdrawn while he struggles with himself to find his bearings and establish emotional contact with his environment. Wanting to feel love and not being able to do so is a frustrating experience. Talking without feeling appears to him like telling tall-tales and makes him feel false, as if he were trying to sell himself. For many men this sort of talking would be a new and alien experience. If it was not a part of their personality before the Army, they did not learn it while they were there. In that organization of men where everybody had equal chances to live or die, words lost their value, or they became too valuable. One did not need to talk much and one was understood without words. Soldiers live in identification with each other; they have the same thoughts, similar feelings; they do not need words. As in complete love, which is complete identification, so in the tenseness or in the

boredom of waiting the soldiers understood each other without words, or had to use but few of them.

The lack of verbalization in the Army has an important function. Fear of death or the actual death of a friend, or a thousand other less tragic but emotionally charged situations—one's longing for home, letters arriving or not arriving, waiting for orders, and so on—represent steady demands on the emotional household. A verbal outpouring of emotions would be a taxation for the soldier who talked and would become unbearable for those who had to listen. Thus the soldier's language becomes verbally poor and emotionally expressive. We know on good evidence, and Ernie Pyle as well as others testify to this, how many different emotions a soldier can express with the same four-letter word. This is a result of a protective mechanism which, by suppressing the articulate expressions of emotions, husband the psychic energies. The soldier functions well only so long as he does not become too aware of his misery.

Since he does not feel too comfortable after returning—even if not always emotionally burdened—he would like to hide under the cover of not talking until he has established emotional contact. Frustrated by his inability to respond to the expectations of his family, we hear again and again the veteran's complaint, "They don't understand; there is no sense in talking—they won't understand." Behind this accusation is the emotional isolation which the veteran feels when he realizes that, at home, he is in another community, different from that of his "buddies." Here he has to use the language of the civilian, and this is a verbal language. Wives and sisters, sweethearts and mothers, are in moods different from his. They also feel the lack of contact, but they usually want words to fill out the emptiness, words to create the contact which was lost between them. Even if these demands are not verbalized, those veterans who are not at ease with words respond with defensive sulkiness. They feel that recollections will revive their Army life and they feel that this is senseless since they are convinced that they will become used to home more quickly if they could "be just civilians" and could forget the Army. Many soldiers have this attitude in the early period of their readjustment, while they are still quite con-

scious of the effects of the Army life upon them. They want to forget, hoping that this will help. And slowly it does. Gradually they will become less aware of the military self and stop comparing it with the demands of the present environment. As his emotional contacts become natural and less strained the veteran will begin to talk, some sparingly, others garrulously, each according to his temperament. They will recollect and retell their experiences, selected and worked through unconsciously for a purpose, namely to regain mastery over their military past and to integrate it in their personalities.

For the combat veteran this is a serious process, much more so than for the many millions of soldiers who never were in combat, who never experienced humiliating fear and who were not exposed to their most primitive instincts. Those who went through long periods of such experiences may develop a new fear, namely, the fear that the suppressed memories may return and will endanger their regained, but not yet well-established, security. This fear appears to be one of the most important factors responsible for the emotional isolation between the veteran and his family.

A young woman and her Marine veteran husband have the following story to tell, and tell it now cheerfully: They met in the factory where they both worked, and married just after he enlisted. He was in the Marine Corps for eighteen months and participated in the hardest fighting in the New Guinea campaign. He was overseas for eight months when he was wounded in the knee, and, after treatment, discharged. He got a job as a clerk and his wife worked also. He, however, behaved strangely. He was restless at home and wanted to be in company. Even if they went out together he would leave his wife at the table in a tavern and sit at the bar where everybody bought him a drink and asked him questions. Under the influence of drink he talked to strangers, but behaved sullenly and withdrawn at home. His wife was unhappy. Everybody thought the marriage would not work out since "the Marines made a drunkard out of him." One night when he was coming home a storm was brewing in the air and lightning was visible. This, and the amount of consumed alcohol, activated the veteran's anxiety. He completely lost his

bearings and his countenance. He yelled and shouted, "The Japs are here!" When he arrived home he looked for cover. He was shaking and finally he fell down. His wife and her father succeeded in getting him to bed. His wife sat at his side like a mother quieting a feverish child. When he awoke the next morning she had a long talk with him. Whatever the content of this discussion was—much more important than words were the feelings—the wife broke the ice of his isolation. She conveyed to him her confidence that he could be accepted and loved no matter how cowardly he might feel. After that he did not go out drinking; he did not need to avoid his wife any longer. He knew that she would accept him whatever he did or was not able to do in New Guinea, for even with a Purple Heart on his chest, he did not feel like a hero. He accepted the free drinks which were given him for his "heroism" since he hoped that the drink and those friendly men would be able to do for him what he could not do for himself, namely, to feel secure in his relationship with his wife.



While separated from home and family, the soldier thought that to be home meant continuous happiness. However, he not only loved but he also envied those at home. Now that he is at home, he wonders what it was that he envied so much. When he left for the Army the civilian economy had not yet been fully converted to pursue the war and he had little time to participate in the process. While overseas, hearing about the civilians' grumbling, he was justifiably angry. After all, what was gas-rationing, shoe-rationing, or standing in line for groceries or for a ticket compared with what he had to go through? For him civilian life was a heaven without restrictions. Even when home on furlough he saw civilian life from a different point of view. He had the prestige of his uniform and the emotions of one who is "going back." So he really was not a part of the civilian life. But when he returns to civilian life and puts on his civilian suit again, he realizes the hardships of being a civilian and resents them. Not that he is not aware of being a thousand times safer, but, because he finds living at home is not as smooth or as easy

as he had imagined, he becomes irritated. Since he did not find what he hoped for—the realization of his fantasy—he becomes an observer. We hear veterans making sarcastic remarks about the life surrounding them. They often act as if they are weighing in their minds whether to enter it or remain outside of it. This is truer for the younger man, and it was truer before the war ended than after. The reasons are obvious. The young man, and the older men if in good economic conditions, can afford some experimentation with their future. But with the mass returning and with the threatening unemployment, the necessity to make themselves a place in the economic life permits little hesitation. They have no time to waste, no leeway for trial and error. This puts the veteran in a state of anxious tension.

In the Army, competition was well regulated and often disappeared completely, since soldiers had the feeling that individual effort was of no use for personal advantage. Besides this, only a small minority went into the Service with the idea of achieving their life career and purpose there. Most of the soldiers, while they did their duty, were motivated and comforted by the feeling that it "won't be forever." But civilian goals and tasks, civilian occupations, have to be selected "for ever." Thus they anxiously want to undo the lost years, to create for themselves a secure place in the economic world. However, they are often not ready to take on permanent obligations. Unable to make long-term emotional investments, they become dissatisfied with any proposition and are always seeking new situations with new hope.

The greater the veteran's inner need to build up his ego by achieving security and success, the more impatient he becomes in his approach. One explained this attitude as a reaction to his Army life where he was forced to stay and could not change his situation at will. Now, with his freedom in his hands, the veteran is often at a loss. He may start something new again and again, chasing a fantasy and seeking a situation of self-satisfied achievement when his own emotional restlessness makes self-satisfaction improbable.

In civilian life, self-satisfaction is harder to achieve than it was in the Army. In the Army the individual soldier's tasks

and possibilities were limited and, moreover, he could usually know whether or not he was living up to expectations. In civilian life he has to limit himself, he has to make choices—he has to give up some chances in order to concentrate on others—so that he finally proves himself to his own satisfaction. Yet, just at this crucial point he feels that he has no time. He has lost patience with himself because he has lost confidence in himself. Thus he tries to change his external situation. In changing from one job to another, however, he may be running away from success as well as from failure. This external behavior may, in some cases, clearly betray the underlying inferiority feelings, while in many others it may cover up the feeling of inadequacy with an exaggerated self-assertiveness. The civilians often do not understand the restlessness and the demands of the veteran. The veterans easily take offense when their self-esteem and self-confidence are disturbed and their hostile tension may increase to a pathological degree.

Chapter 7

FAILURES OF ADAPTATION AFTER RETURNING

Under the stress of Army life the breaking point of the personality is easily recognizable. The adaptability to a specific situation breaks down, the soldier cannot "take it" any longer. Since he cannot change his situation and cannot run away from it, the only way out is in internal, emotional or psychosomatic change. It has been pointed out by those who dealt with war neuroses that the individual who was unable to continue under given specific Army stresses, might be able to function well in civilian life. This is unquestionably true. Yet, the *readjustment to civilian life may put the already exhausted adaptability of the individual under a new stress*, which may break it down. Thus individuals who went through their military life without obvious neurotic reactions may develop them even after they return.

We distinguish two different phases in the neurotic reactions of the returning soldier. The one is the acute reaction to returning, to the trauma of reunion. The emotional state of this period with its withdrawal, inability to love, and guilt reactions may be diagnosed justifiably as a *depression* or a *narcissistic neurosis*. This acute period abates as the returning soldier becomes a part of the life of his family and his larger environment. If the veteran did not have previous personality difficulties and his external situation is favorable, his life from now on may continue smoothly. But, if he did have previous emotional difficulties or if the Army exhausted his capacity to tolerate anxiety and hostility, he will develop neurotic symptoms.



The mastery of hostile impulses is one of the most important factors in adaptation to civilian life. The breakdown of the

ego's control over aggressive impulses endangers the individual as well as society. Civilians as well as soldiers have *to learn to deal with their hostile impulses*. For the veteran this is a much more difficult task than it is for the civilian. Every individual learns to deal with his hostile impulses, to suppress or to modify them, to project or to introvert them, and the ways of handling hostile feelings in relationship to the environment become a qualifying individual characteristic. Unless traumatic, catastrophic experiences shake the psychological structure, the individual's methods of handling hostility continue the same way all through life. One is a mild person, another is more cocky and always on the lookout for his rights. The civilian is seldom threatened by his hostility unless he has an acute neurosis.

However, the soldier was trained to kill when he was in combat and his anxiety and hostility were mobilized to the core. Thus his characteristic ways of handling his hostility were stirred up and often pressed into different channels. Even those, or especially those, who used to be mild fellows, who "could not harm a fly" notice now that their blood boils quickly when they feel hurt, and they often feel hurt. Then their aggressive impulses, trained in the war to have a trigger-like reaction, may come to the fore suddenly. One reads of many veterans who shot their wives; newspapers give almost daily accounts of young soldiers killing the girl who made them jealous, who did not comply with their demands, and so on. Some statistics may exaggerate the figures, but it happens more often than is good for comfort.

There are many gradations in the pathological expression of hostility. "A Pacific Veteran Shot His Wife" was a headline. He did it while they were driving in a taxicab. The cab driver testified that he heard the veteran pleading with his wife to make him a home. She told him not to talk about it until "tomorrow." He drew his revolver and killed her with one shot. We may assume, and the family's testimony affirms it, that this veteran was an extremely dependent man; in his insecurity he was jealous and demanded certainly more attention, love and reassurance than his young wife was able and willing to give him. Frustrated in his dependent need, he was flooded with anger and

desperation. In his fear of being abandoned, the person who was unwilling to satisfy him became his enemy. His ego, too weak to distinguish further, succumbed to the impulse. What was justified and trained self-defense in war becomes an insane, uncontrolled action at home.

If the ego is stronger it may ward off the impulse and postpone action. A young Marine who served fourteen months in the Pacific was discharged on account of his emotional disturbance. After his return he worked steadily as a draftsman and soon married a girl one year older than himself. He was quarrelsome and bitter against authority; he was self-assertive and more than usually proud of his independence. He called everything "charity" that the authorities offered him as a veteran, even the medical service of the veteran's organization. In spite of the fact that it was difficult to live with him, he and his wife got along well, until she gave birth to a premature baby who died. After this event his restlessness increased. He was not only quarrelsome, but he also beat his wife badly whenever he fell into his unhappy mood. Upon her mother's instigation, his wife left him and decided to divorce him. In spite of his exaggerated desire for independence, the threat of divorce broke down his pride and he repeatedly asked his wife to return to him. Finally she agreed. When they were about to leave her mother's home, she noticed that he carried a revolver in his overcoat. Afraid of his uncontrollable temper she asked for an explanation. His answer was that he had borrowed the weapon to use against a man who was after him.

We do not know whether he intended to kill his wife or whether he had succeeded in turning the hostility in a paranoid fashion toward someone else. Although he pondered about killing he did not act in an impulsive manner. Eventually the pent-up hostility and exaggerated self-assertion which covered his dependence drove him into a paranoid condition.

These examples represent extremes and usually the individual seeks a less dangerous outlet. If his hostility is directed toward persons at his place of work, the veteran usually tries to change the external situation by leaving his job. If, for some reason, he cannot do this, his hostile tension increases. His emotional

equilibrium is threatened in an even higher degree if his hostility is directed toward people whom he cannot leave because he loves them, too, and is dependent upon them. Then an emotionally highly charged conflict arises. In general we may say that the weaker the ego, the more quickly it gives way under the pressure of internal hostility, either in action or in psychotic reactions. If the ego is stronger, it fights against the hostility and tries to suppress it. Since the hostile impulses of the soldier are so close to the surface and so easily mobilized, he actually has to employ a great deal of his psychic energy in suppressing his hostile reactions in an environment toward which he feels unfriendly, inferior and envious. He himself is mostly surprised to realize that in the morning before he goes to work he feels a mixed, unclear sensation creeping upon him, not unlike the emotions which he used to feel when he waited for battle. He asks himself whether he is afraid and/or of what he is afraid. He tries to shake the feeling off, telling himself that he has nothing to fear. It is true—he has nothing to fear but his fear; and his fear is the measure of the inner tension caused by his hostile impulses. The case of a young man of twenty-five will illustrate this:

He returned home after four years of service. He was the second of four siblings. His sister, two years older, married when he was drafted, which was before Pearl Harbor. He was then only twenty and he did not mind being drafted. On account of the depression and the financial situation in the family, he had worked hard and felt dissatisfied. He hoped the Army would give him a "break." He had two younger brothers. The next younger was always ambitious and wanted to study medicine. After finishing high school he managed to take some premedical courses while working evenings. The "kid-brother" was still in school. Ed, our patient, felt that he really got the "breaks" in the Army when he was put into the medical corps. He was trained to be a technician. He wrote enthusiastically to his brother who, meanwhile, when he came to be of draft age, was put into the ASTP as a medical student. Ed felt that everything was alright between them. Then he went overseas where he saw much hard fighting and gave plasma to many severely

wounded men. The "medics" have a hard life and, except for the gratefulness of the men they helped and their own good conscience, they receive little recognition. As things became harder in the Italian campaign, he felt more and more frustrated; the young doctors, although much older than he and his brother, reminded him of his brother very much. He envied them, of course, but he also liked them and he had no obvious difficulty in adjusting to them. Finally he developed trench-foot and was sent back to the States and discharged from the Army. His brother was then in his last year of medical school. His father was getting along well financially and he was told that he had time to make up his mind about his future. However, this was more easily said than done. Although he was having a good time, meeting and dating girls, his sleep became more and more disturbed, he yelled in his sleep and he awoke very tired. He told his family that he went through the battle of Salerno during the night—only it was worse. Sometimes he dreamed that he was shot, carried away and operated on. Other times he dreamed that some other man was in an awful condition and he was trying to help him and could not. There were endless variations of painful scenes and he carried the mood of them with him all day. He was angry with himself because he felt that he might become an "NP"; he became quite irritable and finally his brother brought him for consultation.

After he talked about his dreams in vague terms and about his dissatisfaction that he did not really know what he would like to do, the therapist could bring him easily to talk about his brother. Then the envy and competition, the hatred toward him poured out as from a vessel filled to the brim, not in an orderly fashion. He did not say, "I envy my brother because he is going to be a doctor, a medical man, an officer." No, here came the anger that the government, the Army paid for his brother's medical education while he worked for \$64 a month. In this anger was repeated the original envy of the new-born sibling who took away his mother's attention. It was followed by the doubt as to whether he was as capable as his brother; perhaps everybody was justified in giving him up as a worthless individual and putting all their love, money and expectations on the brother.

His hostility pulsed between two poles—between himself and his brother. Here the primary hostility between brothers came to the surface—"Who is better, he or I?" "Whom does my mother love, me or him?" And this basic question and doubt took many forms. The therapist's confidence that nothing unforgivable would happen if he recognized his feelings toward his brother gave him the courage to face his hostility. Yet back in his mind, there lived the notion that so many men had died, that death does not count much; only he did not know whether he or his brother should die. The primary hostile conflict with the brother was reawakened by the actual situation in which it seemed to him that he was losing and the younger brother was winning in the competition. The frustration of the present situation increased his hostility. Instead of facing the conflict which was rooted in him since early childhood, he projected his anxiety on to the war situation, for war is a good rationalization for any horror and hostility.

This case demonstrates what may happen in many instances, namely, that the war experiences and the anxiety connected with them may be used as a screen and defense to cover up the individual conflicts which become reactivated in the highly charged emotional atmosphere of the period of readjustment. The symptoms which then develop have the mechanism and the content of the neurosis for which the individual was singled out by his pre-war life experience and personality. It is the same with combat fatigue or war neurosis. These conditions, too, are activated by an acute breakdown of the adaptive mechanism of the ego and express not only a response to an actual unbearable situation, but with it also the deeper conflicts of the personality.



Even the most dramatic and acute neurotic breakdown is not a sudden development. There are always forerunners of a neurosis which herald the threatening breakdown. And before the breakdown occurs, the ego will use all sorts of regulatory devices to support its adaptive function. We do not intend to describe in detail the unconsciously functioning adaptive mechanisms of the ego—we refer here only to two techniques which are used

quite generally to release and direct emotional tension. These are *drinking and gambling*.

Alcohol has a complex pharmacodynamic effect. Susceptibility to it differs individually. Its most well-known effects are that, if used in small quantities, it decreases inhibitions and diminishes anxiety. It is well known that there is a desire for alcoholic beverages before and after flying missions, in fact in any situation in which anxiety may become not only disagreeable but may even have a paralyzing effect. "Sweating it out" is one of the classical slang expressions of this war. It tells clearly the physiology of what is happening during anxious waiting. The sympathetic nervous system oversupplies the sweat glands with stimuli. Besides this, however, it may send enough impulses to other organs to cause discomfort. Such tension before action, or in other painful situations, is decreased to a bearable degree by alcohol.

People who have learned to live with such recurring anxieties become used to them through a steady suppression of fear. In some cases the suppression may succeed all too well, and it results in an emotional emptiness and boredom. Against this mood the soldier uses gambling as a device. Gambling creates an artificial tension which originates in the competition and in the anxious expectation of the results. The player concentrates in order to win, to beat the other fellow toward whom he does not feel hostile and competitive. The emotional tension of gambling diverts anxiety and hostility to a basically unimportant situation. The releasing effect of alcohol and the artificial tension of gambling as well have a great functional importance in the adaptation of the soldier to the overwhelming tasks of war. However, these are habit-forming devices.

Every intention to reach a goal creates a normal tension of expectation and a tension which originates in the concentration of functions necessary to reach the goal. During war-time the goal may involve highly specific and complex functions such as adjusting telephone communications under enemy fire or flying an airplane under "ack-ack" or removing booby-traps and mines, etc. The concentration necessary to achieve such a goal is increased by fear. Liquor, in adequate measures, removes part of

the fear which otherwise might have grown to paralyzing proportions, and thus it is useful. But after a time the ego may become so weak that the slightest increase of tension appears unbearable and one resorts to alcohol under any circumstance. In other cases the ego becomes so exhausted that it needs artificial tension in order to be able to carry on everyday tasks without anxiety. If such devices as gambling and drinking become so essential that the individual is unable to function without them, we speak of an *addiction*.

Such seriously incapacitating conditions develop, of course, not only in men and not only under war-time conditions. Yet we may recognize an increase in habitual drinking and gambling among veterans. This is not merely a continuation of habits formed in the Army. The more exhausted his adaptability, the less willing and able is the veteran to stand the tensions of civilian life. Thus he uses drinking and gambling in order to keep his hostility and anxiety in check.

While in the Army, the soldier imagined civilian life completely free from tension. He wanted a life without waiting, without boredom, but also without envy and competition, without such experiences as might activate his hostility. For he learned to be afraid of hostility; he knows that its outbursts do not fit into civilian life, that it may cause him trouble and that it may also make him very guilty.

The estrangement of the veteran is the result of his emotional withdrawal—lack of love—and of his hostile tension. He would still have to struggle with these affects were it possible for him to come back to the ideal environment of his fantasies. Even then he would need time to attach his feelings to the reality and to find the right balance between his past military and his present civilian self. Were his environment perfect he would have only himself to blame.



In "The Veteran Comes Back,"¹ Willard Waller writes that the veteran is like an immigrant in relationship to society; that

¹ Willard Waller: *The Veteran Comes Back*, The Dryden Press, New York, 1944.

he comes back as a new member and has to fight for his place. This, I think, is an overstatement. The veteran is not new in his community and he is expected to come back. He has his place, kept open in the heart and in the conscience of the people at home. He comes back like a new member of a club. He has been accepted but he is looked upon with question. He seems to be an enigma, especially to those who have doubts about him. But he, too, has to learn to know and to like the other members of his society—and to trust them.

One does not need to stress the importance of economic security in the post-war readjustment of the veterans. But we shall state it here again from a psychological viewpoint. In the Army the soldier was needed. Even if it often appeared to him that too many worked for too long a time, sometimes he realized that all was needed for the great job: to save his nation, to protect his country, to gain victory. For that goal he fought, or he waited; for that he kept a big army moving, fed, clothed and supplied. Yet, after he has returned home, even after a victorious war, he feels as if he had lost his job. Unless he can employ his energies in a satisfactory way, he feels insecure. Since his self-esteem is unbalanced he becomes tense, irritable, impatient and withdrawn. *Success in his work and love within his family are the two curative factors in his new adaptation.* These two aspects of his reality are in dynamic interaction. The greater his emotional security in love, the better able he will be to collect and apply his energies for work. If he does not succeed in love, his hurt and dissatisfied ego is hardly able to succeed in fulfilling his ideals in work. Ineffective and unsuccessful in work, it will become even harder to find gratification in love.

PART III

THE FAMILY IN WAR

THE FAMILY IN WAR

The total war demanded the participation of the total population. Indeed, in terms of its psychological effects, nobody from infants to the aged remained unaffected by it. In the United States the war did not disrupt the family with the same brutality as it did in countries in which the destruction of physical shelters became the external manifestation of the disorganization of interpersonal relations. Yet here, too, the war left unerasable traces upon the family.

The function of the family is conserving and protective. One may illustrate this from the sociological and cultural history of the family; one may express this in the abstract terminology of biology or of psychodynamics; better yet, one can simply ask anyone and find that family in our culture means *home* and home carries with it the meaning of unchanged and unchangeable, conserving in itself. And this is its function. It does not want to change; it withdraws and withholds, it defends itself against any change.

War means change and therefore danger to the family; even if the homes do not need to be defended physically, they need to be defended emotionally. And this was the first reaction of the family to war; the fear of change, which only slowly gave way to the inevitable. In the following chapters we shall discuss the difference in the emotional processes of the various members in the family, since separation holds a different meaning for the mother than for the wife or sister of the soldier; it holds still another meaning for his father and for his brothers. They all worked through different emotional processes in order to accept and adjust and to live a life of their own.

The adaptive task of the civilian is not as great and far-reaching as that of the soldier. The task of the ego is to master

the emotional response to the separation, and not to conquer a new, unknown and dangerous environment. As we shall demonstrate later, the task is achieved through the process of identification with the soldier, and if it succeeds, it endows the individual with a new strength and with this enhanced capacity to work and to live, the civilian turns to his duties and his opportunities. The war produced both, duties and chances, in innumerable variations for the civilians, fathers worked harder and had a sense of achievement as probably never before; mothers, old and young, went to work, adolescents and even children worked, or had to bear the brunt of a family which was too busy to care. Yet all this was necessary and in the center of this activity was the war; for the individual civilian—his or her war, his or her soldier. The great effort was concentrated on him, on the soldier who emotionally and materially remained dependent upon the home front, upon its resources of love, and on its production. The natural effect of all this was that the world which the soldier left behind changed; that individually the gap created by separation was covered up and life took a new turn without his participation. In spite of all the inherent conservatism of the family in this process of adaptation—i.e., living—every member of his family developed and changed in relationship to him.

Thus the soldier's return is not a simple process of restoration of his original psychological place in the family. He, changed by his war-time experiences, will be welcomed by a family whose psychodynamic balance has also changed, but in another direction and at another pace. They meet each other with the feeling of belonging and expectation, with the conviction that they need each other. Yet it will take time until they know each other well enough again to give their best to each other.

Chapter 8

MOTHERS AND SONS

Motherliness is not an invariable attitude of love and affection for which it is renowned. It has its own developmental history which begins early after the birth of a girl and is rooted in the growing girl's relationship to her own mother; henceforth the mother's attitude toward her daughter will determine and mold her femininity, her desire for children, and her capacity for motherliness. For after a child is born the mother's psychosexual life is partially externalized; what was her past is relived with her child; what were her hopes and expectations become her future in the person of the child. While the motherliness which she expends on all her children may be basically the same for each, she may project a different part of her personality—of her innate propensities, hopes, and ideals—to each individual child. Her love for the daughter, as is well known, differs from that for her son. In her daughter she may hope to realize all her fantasies and wishes for a completely fulfilled femininity; in her son she hopes to satisfy not only her own desires but also those of her husband and society.

Women—in our culture—may often express the desire to give birth to boys rather than to girls. This is for many reasons, but mainly for two. One is society's evaluation of the male sex, and accordingly a son may represent for the woman the fulfillment of her own wish to be a male—to have the prerogatives that come to the man by right of sex. These women, dissatisfied with their own femininity, rarely develop real motherliness. More often—or more normally—the love for her husband, the desire to reproduce what he wants most, determines the woman's desire for a boy and thus the happiness, the sense of bliss and of complete achievement after she has given birth to a son. Then, contented in her femininity and in her motherliness, she is free

to expend tenderness and affection upon the infant. He becomes almost a permanent object of her imagination. And in her fantasies about him, she may live out not only her husband's desires and ambitions but also the highest fulfilment of her own self.

The original identification with the child in tenderness and affection—the attitude of nursing, feeding and taking care of him—recedes as the son grows older, and he becomes the object of love and the representation of her ego-ideal. This developmental change in the mother's love is a natural process, and it need not be expressed in some highly intellectualized ego-ideal. All mothers, the simple and primitive ones as well as the intellectual mothers, want the son to become handsome, attractive, and to represent in some way their own masculine ideals. This is the source of the relationship of the elderly mother toward the son from whom she so often seeks emotional support and in whom she sees the father, the loving superior.

If genuine motherliness is a part of the mother's personality, the identification with her son plays only a secondary role—just enough to permit her a vicarious gratification in all the growth, development and success of her son. Such a mother will be content in her son's happiness even if it means that the son lives his own life away from home, seeking gratifications in his marriage. But if the genuine motherliness is inhibited, the desire to live her own life in the son may dominate the mother's attitude toward him; then the mother will hardly be able to bear the son's development if it does not coincide completely with her own wishes. Domineering as such behavior is, actually it represents a source of unhappiness not only for the son but also for the mother. The lack of genuine motherliness causes a deep inner frustration for which the woman tries to compensate all the time—and somehow seems never to know how to. The overprotective mother who tries to prove all the time that her son still needs her, and the possessive mother who feels that her son owes her so much for all that she has done for him, are women who cover up with exaggerated demonstration a painful deficiency: the want of that sense of security which genuine motherliness gives to the mother.

The inability to develop such motherliness is deep-seated in

the personality disturbances of women. While some narcissistic masculine women will project their ambitions, the depressed, inhibited mothers project their inferiority feelings and frustrated expectations upon their children. The son is expected to fulfil and compensate for all disappointments which the mother ever suffered. Some mothers become frankly dependent, emotionally and often financially, and often act like abandoned children, anxiously clinging to the son. Other mothers avoid the realization of their weakness and take advantage of the strength inherent in the position of mother: they are demanding and domineering in order to receive considerations from the son which they then enjoy as expressions of his love. Yet they appear insatiable: what they unconsciously require is reparation of their damaged self which, however, cannot be achieved by such forced means.



This summary treatment of the gamut of emotional attitudes between mothers and sons must suffice to illuminate the emotional reactions which mothers experience when their motherliness undergoes such strain and stress as the war imposed upon them.

To the normal mother the son of military age appears to be an adult—or almost one. Under ordinary circumstances, the eighteen-year-olds are ready to leave home and to find work and contacts outside the family circle. The older the son the less is the immediate contact between him and his parents. If he is already married and has children of his own, his dependence and loyalty belong to his wife and the parents are usually in the background of his life. Mothers accept this with varying degrees of inner contentment.

But when the son leaves for the Service, especially for overseas duty, his age and marital status play a relatively minor role for his mother. With this event the mother's emotional relationship undergoes a revival which we do not want to call regression. Whatever the son's age may be—whether married or unmarried—the mother's original tenderness and protectiveness are reawakened; for her the adult, capable, independent man

who did not need her any more has become her little boy again, and she relives his childhood in her mind. She recalls longingly and distinctly the details of his childhood and in the reminiscence—softened and subdued, yet heightened by her apprehensions of his coming ordeals—she repeats the experiences of her early motherhood. It is as though she were losing her son once again and for all time to the unknown, and thus it is that her emotional experience is similar to mourning. The sense of loss is more poignant if a mother has to give up to the Army a younger boy who is still living at home. Then the mother-son relationship is directly interrupted. In these cases, although the mother's response takes on the aspects of mourning, still she derives a great deal of immediate gratification with which to console herself. Her motherhood is not wholly in her fantasy: the son's immediate need for love and his increased dependence on her gives their relationship a new meaning. Under the impact of war-time separation, mother and son get closer to each other. Actually their common experience is regressive: the son turns back to the mother instead of turning away from her. For many mothers this is a great satisfaction and a triumph; for others, it is as it should be—just a consolation.

If the mother is normally motherly, her tenderness and her need to protect the son will be just as great, even if her importance to him is not as great any more because he has lived for a long time away from home. As long as the mother can feel protective toward her son—even if this be but a sort of magic thinking—it helps her and it may help the son too. It is motherliness: many middle-aged and even older whose energy and helpfulness accomplished the unexpected during the war drew their enthusiasm from this rejuvenation of their motherliness; they felt happy because they were needed, their sons needed them, and the sons of other mothers too. In their war-time activities, in spite of the geographical and physical separation, the mothers imagined they were protecting their sons bodily and physically—so close to their consciousness was the feeling that “nothing will happen to him as long as I am able to work, to protect him by my own strength and might.”

I met a mother whose three sons were serving in the Pacific theater of war. The battle for Bougainville was on at the time and she had every reason to believe (and it came out that she was right) that two of her sons were in it. She was serene and cheerful. For her, "no news is good news." And she felt: "As long as I don't hear the opposite, I just know they are alright." This is the optimism of the mother who cannot conceive of the death of her son. And how often this sustains and gives courage to the son, too!

Somewhat different and even more complex were the motherly mother's feelings when the son was already married. Her acutely emerging instinctive motherliness cannot bear well to take a second place, not in such a stirring important situation. The mother then feels painfully—even more so than at the time he married—that she is not the closest of kin anymore. All her emotions are not needed, her son turns to his wife in his need for being loved and in his dependence. She still may respond to his going to war with a rekindled motherliness; and she is fortunate if she has several other children, especially if she has sons still too young for the Army; she then may pour out on them the emotions intended for the soldier-son. However if he is an only son and her motherliness appears not needed, she may withdraw her love completely. Such a repression of her love harms her more than would an open, conscious struggle. Thus it may cause pathological reactions in the form of either depression or psychosomatic symptoms.

Only rarely does a mother love her son's wife so much that she can identify with her and give her genuine motherly sympathy without competing at the same time for proofs of the son's love for herself. On the other hand, very often the daughter-in-law, full of stored-up resentment toward the mother-in-law, is happy to grasp and exploit the obvious superiority which the situation offers her. We observed many instances in which the wife tried to exclude the mother of her husband from the common experience, even more than the situation demanded. Naturally the mother takes the second place since the son needs his wife. So the wife is the one who goes with him from camp to camp, to the port of embarkation. But sometimes even while

the son is still awaiting his orders, what little time and affection the mother could give him and receive, are watched and controlled by the wife—even to the extent of refusing to let her go to the station to see him off as the train rolls away. Whatever the permanent result of such a situation will be in the family, the mothers often withdraw and suppress the motherly attitude and may become not only openly hostile toward the daughter-in-law but also inwardly hostile toward the son. This hostility and competition create a conflictful reality for the wife who often may need the help of her in-laws. It may be carried into fox-holes and ships all over the globe, and follow the soldier everywhere: wives and mothers write him letters, asking him to make a decision on this matter and that, however trivial, he can rarely make one objectively since he has such a great need for his wife. And the conflict between mother and daughter-in-law will confront the soldier in all its reality and in all its force after he returns.

Here, however, our interest is centered on the mother: what are the effects of such emotional conflicts upon her during wartime and after? If she is not a well-balanced and independent motherly person, she may suffer deeply from a conflict of her motherliness, from a conflict with her son. Her motherliness was refused and she suppressed her hurt feelings. But the ambivalence, the hostility creeps into her protective attitude toward him. As a result, she will worry more than necessary because she struggles with a feeling of guilt originating in her hostility. She needs to be reassured about her love and for this she manufactures situations in which he is in peril or wounded. While she worries about him and fantasies about her ways of helping and saving him, she often is shamefully surprised by a triumphant hope that in such a situation he may finally realize the worth of his mother's love which he turned down. This is often a motive for continuous preoccupation with the radio and the sense of disappointment, the feeling of being "let down," when "nothing exciting happened today." So great was their need to find nourishment for their worries that these mothers often found it difficult to tear themselves away from the radio long enough to do household chores. Disturbed in their sense of

motherliness, they over-reacted to the reality. We could cite many examples in which the fact that the mother felt neglected and superfluous in the crucial situation of her married son's going overseas, activated a depression. Even if the depression was mild, it was always accompanied by an exaggerated worry for the son's safety. Beneath this concern could easily be recognized the hostility toward the unfaithful son and daughter-in-law.

However, we do not want to give the impression that the daughter-in-law is mainly responsible for the depression of the soldier's mother. There are many mature daughters-in-law who have genuine sympathy and understanding for the mother's situation; many also may realize that their husbands still have an attachment for the mother and, in their love for him, they easily share it with her. Still the competition between the mother and the wife may be mobilized by the very bond which brings them together: both are eager to protect him with their love; each wants to prove to him in her own way that it is a "special" love—not a "duty" love, or a "love that has had its day." Often it is in just such crucial situations that there comes to the mother for the first time the shock-like realization that she is secondary or even superfluous in the emotional life of her son. If her motherliness is genuine, she adjusts to this reality. The fact that the son is away may even help the mother to extend her motherliness to his wife and children. And if the mother has been capable of giving up her son in the normal process of his maturation, she does not need to have neurotic reactions to the war-time separation.



Whenever the relationship of the mother to the son lacks genuine motherliness, the mother's reaction to the war-time separation may have a neurotic character. This, of course, does not only occur when the sons are married.

A relatively young mother of an eighteen-year-old boy was very much disturbed when the son was drafted and was assigned to the Air Corps for training in ground crew work. This was

in the summer of 1945 and although one could not know that the war would end so quickly, still it was to be expected that this boy probably never would see action. His mother, at least unconsciously aware of this, acted, however, as if she were the only mother whose son had to go into the Army. She followed him to the training center and lived for six weeks in a near-by town; she saw her son often, she pitied him for "what he had to go through" and took everything the son experienced in camp life as a personal offense to him. Her agitation about all this made it impossible for the boy to make an adjustment. Her husband, aware of the effect of the wife's attitude upon his son, had to use all means in his power and finally psychiatric help to make this mother understand how her protection was a danger for the son.

Such *overprotective mothers* necessarily make their sons extremely dependent.¹ In this case, however, the inherent weakness of the overprotective mother was too obvious, even to the son. Not only could she not help the son, but she also disappointed him; her obvious dependence was a burden for him; he could and wanted to live without his mother, while she acted as if she could not live without him. She expressed again and again that he was a part of her, that she was a whole, complete person only when she was close to him. This deeply rooted fear of loss seemed to be not an expression for and disguise of hostility toward the son; it was rather the expression of her inability to love what was not herself. The meaning of the trauma of separation for her was this: she was a basically unmotherly woman who experienced a depression and a lack of feeling for the infant after her son was born. And all her life she had tried to overcompensate for this lack of feeling, for not being able to love him as a person but only as a part of herself, only as long as he was in her womb.

This is a pathological expression of motherly overprotection. However, we can observe the same basic dynamism at work but in lesser degrees in the emotional life of innumerable women. To them the separation is necessarily traumatic; it is like giving

¹ David M. Levy: *Maternal Overprotection*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1943.

birth. Yet the fear and the pain of separation must be rationalized; therefore these mothers exaggerate in fantasy the danger to which the son may be exposed. A mother whose son was on a troop ship could not permit herself to sleep at all until she heard of the ship's safe arrival. In her fantasy, she recounted all the dangers which a troop ship might meet. As if she could protect him from the U-boat danger with her thoughts, she would not permit herself to think of anything else. All the time while he was en route she felt nausea and malaise: this she seemed to need to be sure that she not only was protecting her son but also suffered enough to make a sacrifice for him. It is obvious that if this circumstance had lasted for months, this mother might have exhausted herself physically by her exaggerated tension and worry. But after a time, even the most overprotective mother begins to realize that she does not worry all the time. With a sudden sense of guilt she may realize her lack of feeling and she may blame herself for not loving her son enough. Hence a new justification for neurotic over-reaction and intensified worry.

There are also other motivations operating in the traumatic, or nearly traumatic reactions to the separation from the son. The separation is the stirring event which forces the woman to face and perhaps examine her relationship, not only to the son, but also to her husband. A middle-aged woman, attractive and quite active socially, was the mother of a son, twenty years old, and of a daughter of seventeen. The son enlisted in the Air Force and was trained to be a bomber pilot; his training took eighteen months, during which time he was sent from camp to camp. The mother followed him and lived in small, dreary hotels. She left her household and the other members of her family in the care of a relative. One might say she acted as if she were the wife of her son. I met her often after the son was sent overseas and the actual physical separation was effected. Her sorrow, her feeling of emptiness, her inability to employ her interest in anything but writing letters to her son and an occasional card game appeared to her justifiable. However, her grief was much more intense than a young wife would betray and exhibit in such a situation. She was constantly on the verge of

tears and prayers, as if the anticipated catastrophe were impending or as if her son had already been killed in action.

This mother obviously over-reacted to the separation. Not only did she identify herself with the son in leaving the family as he was forced to do, but also she was unwilling to return to her family and fill her role as wife and mother after he went overseas. She did not accept the separation from him. So in fantasy she flew over the oceans with him. We may say that she was not much interested in her daughter and that her husband was not able to divert her emotions from her son. Her past history revealed that although domineering, she was a person capable of love and warmth; her husband did not complain of obvious previous rejection by her. As long as she had her son with her, her libidinous energies were sufficient to play the role of a good wife. Since the identification with her son was interrupted, she felt unable to be a woman—thus she avoided her husband, as well as her daughter.

This example shows clearly that the trauma of separation from the son changes the emotional constellation in the mother, it may activate conflicts which are only indirectly related to the son and to the separation. Crying and worrying about the son thus conceal other reasons for depression. Like this woman, she did not cry about her marriage as long as she had her son, but she felt unable to go back to it without him. Mothers express more and different unconscious conflicts while they grieve about the separation. This is the reason why so many mothers developed anxiety after the separation. As we understand the emotions of this mother, she really could not face the realization that the son "made" the marriage and that without him she was a woman unhappy in her marriage. Many women, facing the same conflict, become afraid that the separation from the son will interrupt the emotional tie with the husband, too—they are afraid of being left alone completely.

There are many unconscious and conscious motivations for the *possessiveness of a mother*. An overprotective mother is necessarily possessive. She cannot give up her son to the Army, to the war, and naturally she cannot give him up to another woman, to a wife either. During war-time, of course, it can

happen that a mother has to face both types of loss. Even very young men, who otherwise would have been under the steady influence of the mother and thus would have waited years to marry, under war-time conditions may marry very quickly. The son of such a possessive mother has even more cause to be anxious for marriage. He is separated from his mother and, if he is capable of doing so, he will deny the dependence upon her and will transfer it to a girl whom he can marry. Now he may even count on support from the mother in this, since his mother may be afraid of interfering with the "last wishes" of a son who may be in combat and may die. Thus the mother, the parents, agree to a marriage which they might have opposed at another time. But the consent does not always represent wholehearted approval; in the mother's mind, the marriage may remain just a temporary war-time expediency. It happened often that the mother of a soldier, after she had agreed gracefully to his marriage, tried to use all her influence to the end that her son should not impregnate his wife, for a child would make the fact of the marriage irrevocable and irrefutable. In such situations, if the mother's influence was of no avail, she might feel deeply hurt, completely and finally rejected by her son and so she might withhold her help and love from her pregnant daughter-in-law.

Such attitudes create an unconscious sense of guilt in the mother. A mother had two sons in the war; the older one married while in Australia. Soon after his marriage he was sent into action in the Solomon Islands. He was wounded and finally sent back to the United States. His wife followed him somewhat later. Only after she arrived did the mother develop the symptoms of a traumatic neurosis. She became sleepless; she awoke from short, superficial sleep with terrible nightmares. She dreamed of scenes she had read of in the newspaper or had seen in the movies; she dreamed about both of her sons in the most traumatic situations, endangered and dying in various ways. Her anxiety and worry tortured her constantly. Analysis of her dreams made it obvious that she could more readily face the death of her son than adjust herself to live with him after he was wounded, and even less could she accept him with another woman who had rights to him. The mother's guilt about her death-

wishes and her fear that the life of her other son might also be endangered made her frantic with fear. Thus at the time when she wanted to be more protective and more indulgent, the possessiveness of this mother made her feel guilty, thus activating a neurosis. In this case, it was an anxiety neurosis with much the same symptoms as a war neurosis—so great was her identification with her sons.



The possessive mother's identification with her son is massive, as we have seen; her son belongs to her and she cannot bear the separation. It is somewhat different with a *strong, ambitious mother* who projects her ego-ideal to her son and expects him to satisfy her ambitions. It is fortunate if the son can make a career in the service such as his mother could not expect him to achieve in peace-time. But more often the opposite happened. There were many soldiers whose schooling, social status, income and achievement qualified them for much better posts, yet they remained privates or non-commissioned officers for the duration of the war. Ambitious mothers suffer from this and are always on the defensive; they fantasy and dream about heroic deeds which will prove to the world—unconsciously, to themselves too—that their son is better or the best of all the sons who are out in the fight. For, to many mothers, the men have to prove themselves! Prestige and external recognition are often more important to the mother than to the son, especially as long as he is in the Army. The mothers, who never left the competitive community of their friends, often feel, in spite of the sympathy afforded them because their sons are in the Army, that they have to prove that their sons are better than others. They want them to have prestige and to become famous. While the men are in dangerous situations, such fantasies may cause conflict for the mother who, while she assumes that she wants nothing more than the safety of her son, dreams about the Congressional Medal of Honor, of the Presidential Citation, the Purple Heart, or the Distinguished Flying Cross. Once the danger is over, the mother's clamoring for prestige becomes free from guilt.

These strong and ambitious mothers often are unable to iden-

tify themselves with the real situation in the Army; they think of it as they thought of school, where their boy excelled. They expect the Army to give him the same recognition. I have heard men painfully and in primer-like fashion explain to their mothers again and again the system of promotion in the Army, but to no avail. The mothers remain adamant. They insist, "But you are a specialist," or "You are older," or "You could do this and you could do that"—all to prove to themselves that he is really not one of the millions, but is outstanding. It is readily understood how this may and does affect the sons. As long as they are in the Service, they can shake off these demands since they are far away from the mother's influence and live by the standards of the Army. When they return, they suffer from their insecurity, which is all the more aggravated if they feel that they are being criticized by the mother: they now know, they did not do well enough for her. Many of the boys actually can hardly face this and avoid coming home since they feel that it will be most difficult for them to make an adjustment within their own family, and at the same time adjust their combat selves to the totality of problems which confront them.



We spoke of the overprotective, the possessive, and the narcissistic mothers as extreme types. Actually every mother has, in varying degrees, the qualities which are dominant in these types. Thus any mother's response to the separation from the son and to his war-time experiences will be a mixture of the emotions which we described above. For all mothers are protective of the son; they all feel that he is a part of their own personality and are affected by his successes and failures. While these aspects of motherliness are universal, the mother's relationship to her son receives an added emphasis when she becomes dependent upon her son's financial support.

The economic dependence of the mother upon the son often permits gratification of their mutual hidden dependence. Sons were deferred from military duty on the basis of their mother's dependence upon their support, and their mothers in turn often felt a sense of gratification that they had succeeded in protect-

ing their sons. In other situations, the dependence of the mother was emotionally and practically such a burden on the son that he would much rather have gone into the Service than carry on at home. However, he could not master the conflict which arose between the obligation which he felt toward the mother and his need for freedom. A young man of twenty-one was deferred since he was the main support of his mother and of his three younger siblings after his father's death, which had occurred four years previously. He was very much attached to his father and felt a pride in being able to take over his role and to work for the family. The mother, a possessive and dependent person, took it for granted that her oldest son should become a substitute for her husband in providing for the family. When the younger sister reached the age of seventeen and the brother became sixteen, both worked and earned money; however, they spent it on themselves while our patient did not allow himself the slightest pleasure. He became embittered and enlisted in the Navy with the feeling: "It serves them right. They'll see how far they can get along without me!" However, he could not adjust in the Service. He worried a great deal about his mother, who soon began to complain about a heart condition. The young sailor became so depressed that he was soon discharged. In this case mother and son were mutually dependent upon each other. The son paid for the unconscious gratification of being in the father's place with his enslavement to his mother.

Many mothers lived during the war on the allotment the son provided. Many accepted the allotment even if they did not need it. This attitude can be explained by the fact that the mothers responded to the war-time separation with an increased emotional dependence on the son. They saw him as a provider, since as such he represented not only a son but also father and husband. The anxiety of these mothers about the possible loss of the son became very severe. Their chronic insecurity put these middle-aged or elderly women under an emotional tension which resulted in more or less severe psychosomatic conditions. Organic conditions such as arteriosclerosis and chronic heart ailments were often aggravated by the chronic anxiety. In various "letters from the readers" in newspapers we read frequently

about the complaints of these mothers who, during war-time, worry openly about themselves more than they do about their sons. It is obvious that their insecurity becomes even more oppressive if the son marries, and not only his allotment but also his emotional obligations are transferred to his wife.

The soldier cannot help but be aware of his double burden, which is easier for him to bear as long as he is away in the Army. More than by the distance alone, he is helped by the very fact that he is in the Army, that he is in an exceptional situation which permits him to accept the love of both women, his mother and his wife. And they both may express their love for him freely in the competition for his care and support. After he returns, his emotional situation becomes more difficult. Mothers usually act as if their dependence upon the son is a natural right. Their demands appear sociologically justified in our patriarchal tradition which claims that the children owe their working ability (and its returns) to the parents; this, translated into modern terms, means: the children owe the parents for their education and they owe their mother especially, for all that she has done for them. The dependence of the mother upon the children, however, is motivated more deeply than by mere economic reasons: it originates in the basic identification between mother and child which may finally evolve a complete circle so that if the mother regresses, she becomes, so to speak, her son or her daughter. It is in keeping with this regressive trend that mothers, as if forgetting the giving and tender attitudes of motherliness, become increasingly demanding. Their demands often appear unreasonable and insatiable. No doubt there will be much hardship for elderly dependent mothers. Many may be justified in feeling impoverished and badly treated on account of the marriages of their sons; and there may be situations in which the letter of the law does an injustice to the actual facts.



Many mothers, disappointed in their dependent needs, readily carry over their demands from the individual whom they loved to the government or to the state. Mothers, generally speaking, become easily resentful toward the government which took their

son into war. This was used in many ways and for various purposes as political capital; however, the mother's demand upon the government is emotionally founded and may be very much the same, whatever her political orientation. When the mother, seeing her wounded son, cries out, "What did they do to you?" she does not think of the enemy, and she does not picture the German or the Japanese soldier who wounded him. Her first thought is: "Who can undo what was done to you?" And she actually turns to the government with her reproach as well as with her dependence. She feels that only her country, her government, the superindividual father, who ordered him to war, can and shall undo the wrong and pay for it.

This demand upon the government is an expression of the mother's acutely activated dependence; it is an emotional response to the tremendous loss which she feels when her son is wounded. Her ego-ideal is shattered; all her ambitions have to be stifled; and for this, the mother rarely blames the enemy, and then only intellectually; emotionally she has nothing to do with the enemy. One cannot ask compensation from someone whom one hates, whom one cannot trust, and whom one wants to see defeated and weak. Thus the enemy, his bullet, is quickly forgotten and the mother transfers her dependence to the impersonal strong father, to her government.

Social workers will have much to do with the mothers' justified and also with their unjustified demands for compensation. But the compensation is not for real loss alone. Many mothers will say for many years to come, "What did the war do to me!" and by this they may think of everything that they do not like in their sons who returned from war unlike what they were when they left. Many of the changes in their personality might have occurred without the war, too; perhaps many of the sons would not have lived up to the mother's expectations anyway and they might have married the girl of whom the mother did not approve. However, if these things happened during the war, the war becomes the ultimate cause since the superindividual monster with its manifold effects actually relieves in many cases the individual's responsibility. Mothers express great worry about the behavior of the returned soldier; they complain about his

language, his cursing, his drinking, his restlessness and lack of ambition, and they blame it all on the war, which had wrought these changes in him and thus violated the mother's image of him. Some of the mothers, of course, try to educate (or re-educate, as it were) the son and they become really outraged in their helplessness because their frank frontal attack on the son's habits is certain to fail. For her failure in this, too, the war is to blame; in fact, for all the trivial disappointments as well as for the serious ones.

In this way the veteran's mother, and his wife as well, develop a much more acute "veteran psychology" than the veteran himself. Left to himself, he might wait and struggle until he finds his way home to being a civilian. But this struggle is impatiently watched by those whose ambitions he does not fulfil; they then, in order to cover up their sense of guilt about their critical attitudes toward the veteran, will say to him: "We don't blame you; we blame the Army, the war; they did this to you. You have the right to get compensation, help, etc." Of course he has the right and we do not mean to imply that he should not ask for all the help he needs. What we want to point out is that this impatient, critical attitude of the mother increases the soldier's sense of inferiority. The veteran feels that he himself is accused; he feels that he is accused and excused at the same time. In order to defend himself against the accusation, he has to give in to the tendency which excuses him. In this way, however, he becomes more dependent than he would be if he did not sense the pressure of parental ambition. This is the reason that many unmarried men, released from the Army, do not feel too happy about staying at home. They do not want to feel as put in their old place, in that position which they had as children. Whether the soldier-son was the favorite of an overprotective mother, or the ideal of an ambitious one, whether he was a substitute for her father or one of those whom she does not let grow up; all these represent conflicts which he tried to outgrow during the war. Whether he succeeded entirely or not, he feels that he has to defend his gains.



“War years count double”—this is true not only for the sons but also for the mothers. Will the mother know and heed this? She relived her motherhood thousands of times during the war; she gave birth to her son in her worry and anxiety; she received him with each of his letters; she prepared herself for giving him up and she never ceased waiting for him. How grateful she should be that he has come back, capable of living his life as his own. In the humbleness and exhilaration of this satisfaction she may feel free: her job is done.

Chapter 9

FATHERS AND SONS

It seems to be an accepted, common-sense attitude that reactions of fathers toward their soldier-sons call for and receive much less attention than those of the mothers. Such a generally accepted phenomenon expresses the deep psychological and sociological differences in the mother-son and father-son relationships which are taken for granted without further discussion. We, too, while placing the fathers in the limelight, deal with their problems more briefly than we treated those of mothers and sons. But not because they are less important! The father, too, is deeply concerned over his son's insecurity, is distressed by his suffering, is profoundly affected if he is wounded or killed. But he is less conflictfully stimulated by the anticipation or the actuality of separation. Not that his is a lesser love and attachment than that of the mother, nor that he is diffident or indifferent to the uncertainty which pervades his son's future. But because the father encounters fewer new or renewed demands upon himself in his relations with his son, now a soldier. Thus the problems of Fathers and Sons are less stormy and less complicated.

The father's relationship hitherto has long prepared him for acceptance of the situation. His identification with the son, a primary function in the father-son relationship, has undergone fewer changes and fewer shifts in the course of its development and is, thus, less neurotically tinged than the mother's. For him it is not necessary to reject, to renounce, or to deny this bond which fashions the very essence of masculinity. Indeed, the son's enlistment or induction into military service may even strengthen the tie—for he, the father himself, may or might have served in another war; he might possibly be serving in this one too, were it not for age and other reasons. And in this new

experience of the Army the identification between father and son can celebrate its triumph.

The deep gratification which a father experiences at the birth of a son represents the fulfilment of the instinct of survival and the continuation of his self. In our society this sense of elation is interpreted as the father's satisfaction in his masculine strength, in his virility—a contentment which is reinforced by the conviction that that which is best in him will become manifest in his son.

For fathers may see in sons the promise of the fulfilment of their own ego-ideals. This identification has its biological basis and finds many detailed elaborations in the father's fantasy as he follows his son's development year after year. He measures his son's growth by his own fantasies and himself against his son. However natural this process is, it often is the source of a disturbed relationship between a father and his son. A father, dissatisfied with his own achievements, may be so strongly ambitious for his son that he fails to accept him as he is. He feels and requires that his son be and do better than he himself. The resultant nagging, critical and insistent attitude toward the son may harm his later development to manhood instead of promoting it. Or a father, finding in his son manifestations of his own ideal, may fail to see him as he really is; he may spoil him with overindulgence and overprotection. Paradoxically, he feels that this idealized "new edition" of himself is really not strong enough to steer his own course in life and is unaware that his watchfulness over him is not the best preparation for independent masculinity. Another father may be able to project all his hopes and expectations onto a son only as long as he is an infant but cannot accept him while he is growing up and after he appears to be a rival. Reluctantly, he sees in the son a competitor for his wife's attention and also the individual who, in being so much like himself, exposes those qualities he does not like in himself or which he wished to have himself.

The mother, as it may be recalled, is the child's first teacher. It is while still under her care and dependent upon her for the catering to his physiological and emotional needs that the boy grows step by step toward identification with the father. The

oedipal phase is that crucial point in his development when his relationship to his mother includes a new phase of his psychosexual growth. It is no longer one merely of dependency. And it is now that competition with the father begins. If the father is emotionally mature he will not interfere with intimidating or provocative actions, thus fostering and permitting the boy's further identification with himself. Such an attitude leads to the resolution of the oedipal complex and to the formation of a super-ego which leans strongly on the father as its basic model. Avoiding strong conflicts between father and son, the father succeeds in realizing his own unconscious desires; for his ego-ideal will survive in the son's super-ego, in that function of the personality which acts as an internal censor, condoning this and condemning that, approving one step and disapproving another, all of which moulds the character.

The son's goals may appear to be on a higher level of aspiration than that of the father's. Yet, closer analysis will reveal that their aspirations are basically similar. The son himself will realize this later in life, when he, too, will have been a father for some time. But it is not always easy for a father to permit a serene, untroubled development of his son and to refrain from inhibiting and threatening actions. There may be much in the son's behavior which may irritate him and thus generate friction. The son may rebel against the father's restrictions and insistences or he may submit too readily and too easily. He may be submissive because of fear, yet at the same time, rebellious. But this is not the place to delineate the many forms which a son's reactions to his father may take and the consequent effects upon the son's personality. For us, the important fact now is this: the triangle of father, mother, and child represents a complex psychodynamic relationship which determines the character formation of the son and at the same time reactively influences the emotional life of the parent. The mother's motherliness, the father's mature fatherliness, and the son's response thereto all play an important role. The relationship between mother and father is equally decisive. A mother who finds satisfaction in her husband need not look to her son for the fulfilment of her masculine ego-ideal, while a father whose masculinity is ac-

cepted and appreciated by his wife need not begrudge his son the affection of the mother nor be jealous of his growth. The son, in turn, while his personality is still being moulded, becomes aware of his parents' expectations of him. He senses not only what he is expected to represent and achieve in himself as a person but also that through him his parents anticipate gratification and compensation for their own specific frustrations. He knows that he is a balancing and compensating factor in their lives and often he resents this role and rebels against it.

Although each child of the family is in a triangle, psychologically uniquely his own, the father's attitude toward his soldier-son will be affected by his evaluation of his other children, too. This will decide the limits and extent of his identification with the soldier. These psychodynamic interrelations are, of course, too intricate to be dismissed so summarily. We merely wish to indicate their importance in any discussion of the soldier and the veteran. They patterned his preparation for life and the nature and level of his aspirations and thus influenced the manner in which he will face the Army and whatever it may hold for him. They set the emotional scene which will form the background of his and his family's reactions to the separation. Finally, they create the emotional setting awaiting his return which will decide to a considerable degree whether and how the gulf created by separation and war-time experiences can be bridged within the family.



At the time of going into the Service the son turns to the father, not with his dependence but with a reinforcement and enhancement of the identification. Whatever the son's conscious opinion of his father may be at the time of induction, for every man there was a time when his father was master and the model of strength. Now when he is leaving for an uncertain and insecure future, in the regressive mood which makes him more dependent upon his mother, he finds again in his father that source of strength—or he hopes that he will find it. Thus the son is prompted to behave toward his father again as he did when he was a little child and had to show the father that he was not

afraid. The father, as if knowing that he has resumed this role of master and model (and again on the basis of identification) suppresses his own fears and worries and acts as he acted when the son was a child. He seems to be saying, "I know this is hard for you, son, but I did it or could have done it, so you, too, can do it without fear." Therefore the wordless farewell between the two; they have suddenly recognized each other again in this identification which is too deep for words. All this, and perhaps more, is in the handshake after which the son departs with a sense of trust in the father and with a feeling of obligation to him to do well, while the father returns home with the feeling that his son is in him, yet has taken with him the best of him—his courage and his love.

When the feeling between father and son is so strong that few, if any, words need be spoken, the father will not voice his own concerns for the son as openly and as exaggeratedly as mothers do. After his departure, rather, he suppresses his anxieties and worries. The role that he consciously wished to play for the son—that of being a model of courage and masculinity—reactively affects the father and he is thereby forced to suppress his anxiety. Often, when stirred to seek comfort by breaking his silence, he will refrain with the rationalization that he must be strong to support his wife, the mother, whose perturbation would be heightened if the father spoke his innermost feelings. This silence may be resented by his wife who may interpret it as indicating indifference or "lack of understanding." A more sensitive and discerning wife, however, will sense that her husband needs some help for himself, for the suppression of his affects may harm him, it may activate those psychosomatic disturbances to which he is predisposed by age and constitution.

Many fathers actually overplay the role which they took upon themselves at the time of impending and actual separation. They continue to write the son in the same vein as they bade him a wordless farewell; they advise and caution him in detail as to how he should adjust to military life and what the real military attitude is. This irritates the son and reawakens in him his old antagonism. Or the fathers may strive to relive their own youth in the identification with the son's military career; thus they are

excessively proud of his achievements and attribute undue importance and glory to every little detail. This narcissistic identification with the son may become very unrealistic; such fathers derive gratification from actions for which they themselves would have lacked the courage yet they come to believe that they would have had the courage to perform as nobly as the son. While the mothers who have similar ambitions for military prestige suppress them with guilt, these fathers fantasy them freely and attain vicarious gratification without guilt and thus they are boastfully carried away by the identification.

The father identifies himself not only with the son, but also, in some measure, with the Army. Army life, either by direct experience or by tradition, is a prerogative of the masculine ideal. In a sense, the Army becomes a substitute for his own father image. He may thus transfer his own role to the Army. His own authority may have failed; the Army's cannot or will not fail. Even more, he expects the Army to fulfil his expectations and to correct his lapses, to bring out those good qualities in the son which, until then, had not been manifested to the father's satisfaction. Thus, such a father hopes that through the Army life the son will come closer to realizing his ideals. If the son achieves this growth through his Army experiences, the father is saved from facing his own conflicts with the son, which actually may have, or did, interfere with the latter's personality development. But the Army is not a simple educational institution. The hazards of Army life, especially in time of war, are too many. And the chances are too few that the son, relieved from the conflict of the home, will get into a situation which offers the best possibilities for his development. It occurs, infinitely more often that the sons of these fathers are unable to adapt to the Army. Thus: A young man, talented, but very passive and withdrawing, never could live up to the expectations of his strong, ambitious and driving father. The father was very eager to influence his son to enlist in the Navy in the belief that a routine strict but free from the emotional turmoil of the home would help him to overcome his passivity. At his urgent insistence the son did enlist. But life in the Navy did not help him or bring about what the father had hoped for. The son

withdrew from the members of his unit and became slow in his achievements. Finally he was discharged. After he returned, his relationship with his father was burdened with the newly intensified conflict. His resentment toward his father mounted, since his father was responsible for his recent failure. The hostility and his embarrassment about his failure increased his guilt toward and fear of his father. Thus his symptoms—the end link of the spiral—became worse than ever. He withdrew from people and shied away from any effort; thus in final analysis, he demonstrated the failure of his father's attempts.

Similar emotional conflicts of varying intensity may confront many veterans. One must not forget that the veteran returns to his home bearing within himself some degree of bitterness against military authority or against all authority. This rebellious attitude may be superficial or it may be deep. In any event, especially in those instances where Army life did not absorb the family conflict, the rebelliousness will be very easily displaced to the father who, after all, was the first to represent authority in the son's life. Even if the father has not identified himself strongly with military authority, the mere fact that he is the father will attract the son's resentment to him. If the father really has been, and still is, enthusiastic about the Army and boasts of what he thinks it did for his son or even what he thinks the son did for the Army and his country, the veteran will be repulsed by this attitude. For he will resent his father's vicarious gratification in his experiences and prestige and feel with intense bitterness that his father does not want to and cannot know what he "went through" to acquire them. The son will rarely have insight enough to realize that the father's boisterous vauntings have their own specific motivations: they may be expressions of his sense of relief over the ending of his anxious waiting; they are exaggerated by his elation over the success with which he had concealed his anxiety. And now when the son is safely home, his father continues playing the role that all is well and could not have been otherwise—so strong is his satisfaction in the son's survival.



Moods not tuned well to each other are very irritating. Other members of the family, as well as the father, celebrate this conquest over anxiety in an exultant fashion. However, this atmosphere of rejoicing for reasons not clear to the veteran-son oppresses and impresses him with the feeling that all along his family have failed to comprehend the depth of his suffering and that "they don't understand" the mood of his homecoming. This alone may be enough to stir up the old animosities and grudges toward the father and thereby give the son the impulse to leave home, to establish himself independently of the father who appears to him, in the insecurity of his homecoming, overwhelming. This problem, this reawakening of the primary conflict between son and father, may attain great proportions in families entrenched in strong patriarchal traditions and influences. The ease with which the irritability between father and son, in such families, is appeased or diluted or even disappears depends upon circumstances. If the son is returning to a city or to a situation which will enable him to soon establish himself independently, the initial irritability may disappear quickly. But if he is returning to a farm or to a small family business and he is compelled to work with the father, the initial conflicts may cause severe difficulties in his readjustment.

We pause here to give an illustration which, though not too pertinent, may give an intimation of what may transpire in the veteran's attitude toward his father. A young man of twenty-two was severely wounded. He bore no visible scars, but a bullet still remained imbedded in the muscular wall of his heart. He had been advised by the Army doctors that he could live long if he lived quietly. He returned home to the family farm. Although his family was informed of his condition, the veteran worried. Remembering how the father used to be toward him, he felt that he expected more help of him than he should or could give. This was not the father's fault; he tried to accept the son as an invalid but the son, wanting to live up to his old civilian standards, could never feel sure whether he was doing too little work for his father or too much for his heart. And while he was worrying about his health, he felt that his father could not really accept his present weakness.

The veteran-son, in the mood of his returning, whether he is wounded or not, is apt to have conflicts with his father. He has gotten away from authority in one form and he does not want to meet with it again in another form. For the time being, he cannot avoid being rebellious. And if, for some reasons, for example, the far-reaching bonds of a patriarchal tradition, he cannot escape the father's authority and he must remain within the confines of the family, he may express his hostility freely or he may become very much withdrawn or inhibited. In either case conflict ensues. The relationship between an authoritative father and his son is usually already permeated with friction while the son is growing up and trying to establish his adult personality. The experiences of everyday life, however, slowly diminish and dissipate the open manifestations of competition, the son either leaves home to establish himself separately and independently or, if he remains in the patriarchal situation, he adjusts to his place and accepts it. But after he has been in the Army and has known what it is to acquire independence in some degree, acceptance of the father's authority again becomes a different matter. He may have only been a buck private—but so were all the others in his unit; therefore, as long as he himself had violated no regulations, he could feel that the "tyranny" of authority was not being aimed at him personally. After this relative freedom from authority and after the experience of "being on his own," it is not easy to return and resume the old place, with its prescribed, defined and limited role. He feels, almost consciously, that submitting to this is a degradation and he will rebel against surrendering himself by a repetition of the original conflict with the father. If he is strong and independent enough, he may leave the family unit. However, if he feels that he cannot face competition outside the family and that the farm or the family business is the best place for him, he may allow himself to be swept into regression, for in order not to rebel he must become dependent. His personality development is thrown back on an old axis and it has to proceed from this point of regression. Thus, in many instances, we may observe men who were successful in the Army developing chronic neuroses at home.

Fathers, themselves capable, active and not dependent upon

the son, may be very helpful in the readjustment of the veteran. They can give real support, financially and emotionally as well. It is the father's task to keep the mother satisfied; he can free his son from the burden of surrendering to a dependent and demanding mother. But real emotional help from the father comes largely from another source, from his ability to accept the returning son as an adult and mature man. For there is always the danger that the father may be misled by the son's immediate need to regard him again as merely a boy who, needing his help, should not question his authority.

Indeed the measure of a parent's personality—father's and mother's alike—is the capacity to free the son to achieve maturity and finally to accept him as an adult with his own goals and purposes. Many parents cannot permit this gracefully and even in normal times there is a fight and a struggle. The war has reinforced the parents' position because the son, after many years of independence, needs a new start. However, it is not easy to find the middle path between his actual need for help and his dependent tendencies. The parents in offering their aid are not aware that they may be responding to the son's regressive need with a regressive tendency of their own. The son's economical and emotional, perhaps even physical, insecurity reawakens their original fatherliness and motherliness. Thus the parents strive to achieve security for him often on the primitive level of indulgent, protective parenthood in relation to a helpless child. The veteran senses this and anticipates, apprehensively, a repetition of the early relationship. He cannot help but respond neurotically to the situation. For, although it is true that under the stress of his immediate, urgent distress, he has regressed in some ways, still he is an adult, a man who has seen much, suffered much and experienced more than the previous generations of men. It would be too disappointing for him to feel that his parents can mitigate his distress only by regarding him as a child once more. Hence his never verbalized request to his parents is that they, especially his father, should recognize the opposing tendencies in his situation—his actual but transient dependence and his striving need for reestablishing his independence. Only if the father can respond to this, will the son be able to accept his help without being harmed by it.

We may assume that there is always a residue of the original conflict between fathers and sons. Whenever the external situation permits the repetition of this conflict, the interpersonal relationships will be disturbed. The ensuing hostility and tension will be even greater if the veteran is married and has a family of his own. The dependent relationship to his father is then, of course, harder to take and here we may point out that the conflict between father and son may be very greatly aggravated by the son's wife. The young wife needs her husband's prestige for her own emotional balance and is extremely sensitive to anything and everybody who seems to question his importance. Thus she will insist that her husband assert himself and share her resentment. So even when the son, knowing his father and liking him, does not feel hurt by his attitude (or if hurt can easily forgive him) he cannot allow himself to do so since his resentment is constantly stirred up by his wife. The veteran has to be a mature person and certain in his love to be able to withstand the pressure of his wife's demands. If he is discerning, he realizes that his wife's criticism of her in-laws implies a criticism of him since he could not become more independent of his parents. But more about this in our discussion of the veteran and his wife.

The conflicts between a superior father and his veteran-son have, of course, manifold manifestations. We have stressed mainly the inhibiting effect of the father's position of authority upon the personality development of the returning son. The most important motivation of this inhibition is the hostility which the son feels for the father and which he has to suppress if they are to continue living together. Often, in spite of best intentions, the hostility breaks through the bounds of this suppression and makes living together impossible. Father as well as son may feel relieved if the external situation permits them to separate and find their own ways.



Obviously, not all veterans come back to strong and domineering fathers. Many return to the family to meet with a father who is anxious for and dependent upon the help of his children, including that of the veteran.

The father's relationship to the son, as may be recalled, culminates in the identification of their ego-ideals. No wonder that fathers derive great satisfaction from the success of their sons. Yet, their satisfaction remains undisturbed only so long as the father feels that he himself succeeded in his own ambitions and measured up well to the expectations of his son. If he is, or he feels, an unsuccessful man, his response to the achievements of his son becomes conflictful. Therein lies the difference between the father's and mother's attitude in relationship to the son who fulfils their own frustrated hopes. The mother can enjoy her son's success as her own without conflict; if she has a normal motherly attitude toward him she does not feel competitive with him; she is not envious of him and therefore she can become dependent upon him. The father, however, may feel embarrassed when he compares his achievements with the success of his son. His self-reproach and guilt over his failure may become conscious and his inferiority feeling humiliating. If he becomes financially dependent upon the son he cannot take from him easily. His demands become modified by his sense of failure. Often he may irritate his son with his modesty and refusal rather than with the exaggeration of his demands, as dependent mothers often do. In such situations, while the veteran is burdened with responsibility, he profits emotionally since his tasks may give him assurance of his abilities which, when accepted and unchallenged, offer him freedom to grow.

Yet there looms another conflict. The failure of the father may be a real disappointment for the son. It represents to him the degradation of his ego-ideal which may fill him with concern not only for the father but also for himself. The relationship between this father and son will illustrate the point: The father, in this case, was a successful business man; he was stern, just, ambitious and exacting in his demands upon his only son. The son lived in an awe of his father. His reverence toward him and his fear of him were not without neurotic effects. He was always anxious to please his father. He made quick progress in college and in business; he proved all the time to his father and to himself that he was capable of fulfilling the father's expectations. It was planned that he would expand the business which

the father began, thus satisfying a common ambition. Then the crash and the depression came. They could not rescue more than an annuity which provided financial security for the father, while the son had to prove his abilities in business independently. The son's career developed satisfactorily. He was in his early thirties when he was inducted into the Army. He returned three years later. During this time the father lived in his fantasy as the powerful and strong person. And his image of him was not corrected in spite of letters which indicated that the father's arteriosclerosis had begun to show its effects, in that his behavior was peculiarly rigid, at times he withdrew from conversations and at other times he repeated endlessly details of the glamorized past. This was bad news which worried the soldier for a moment, but the image of the failing old man did not become a reality for him until he returned home. And then he could hardly adjust to it. The veteran did not live with his father but felt obliged to visit him regularly, hoping to find him as he used to be. Each time he felt frustrated in his futile desire and he became more and more irritated by his father's condition. He felt that it was his duty to succeed fast, now more than ever in order to give his father the satisfaction for which he was waiting as the ultimate fulfilment of his life. The more the veteran tried to fulfil his father's ideals the greater was his frustration when he saw him defeated and weak. He was eager to give his father time and attention, even love, but he felt frozen when he saw him old and feeble and unresponsive. This stirred up anxiety. He felt unknown and unexplainable fears. This was not the old fear of the punishing father, but the fear of his own hostility toward the man who was no longer an ideal. Identification with him did not mean success but foreshadowed death. He felt helpless not only in his effort of helping his father but also in his effort to conquer his hostility and guilt. Everybody has wished sometime to defeat his father, yet when this really occurs, the wish-fulfilment itself, like in a Greek tragedy, becomes the punishment.

The dependence of the father upon the son, whether it is only emotional or also financial, always mobilizes similar emotions which forced this veteran to try to avoid his father and escape

the conflict. Most of the veterans, even if not as articulate about the conflict as this man was, will be able to verbalize their irritability toward their fathers; and they often will feel justified in avoiding their obligations. In our society man has less justification for dependence than woman. Sons will much more easily take the responsibility for a dependent mother than for the father. This can be explained on the basis of the original emotions toward the parents. If the mother, who once satisfied her son's dependent needs, is weak and helpless, the son has an emotional understanding of her needs and a readiness to take over the role of the father toward her. Toward his father, who was the image of strength, he cannot feel the same way. He has to surmount this new aspect of identification which activates the fear of failure and of old age, and only after he conquers this fear will he possess the maturity to assume the role of a father toward his father.



It is impossible to delineate all the variations in the father's relationship to the soldier-son and the reactions of the son to him. One aspect of it, however, has to be mentioned: The father's emotional situation as it changed in connection with war-time economy and as it may be affected by the post-war conditions. Although we just devoted some thoughts to the dependent father there were relatively few of them during the war. Fathers worked harder than ever. The unprecedented production was mobilized, organized and toiled by them. On every level of the population, fathers gained security, importance and prestige. The harm of the economic depression seemed undone; fathers could fulfil their own ambitions during the war.

While building all this wealth for destruction he, the father, thought of him, his son. He planned for him and worked for him; he made weapons for him to be protected and to be victorious, to come home. He created, or wanted to create, security in which he could participate after he returned to safety. He was aware all the time of his protecting and powerful love for him—of his own will to live.

How many fathers are there, however, whose position permits them to encompass their sons in their productive security? Who can be safe and let the son be secure in participating in their own achievement? How many more are those fathers whose security and prestige diminished immediately in the economic insecurity of the post-war period? These fathers, too, are aware of the identification between themselves and their sons but they may be afraid of this, anticipating that under the economic stress fathers and sons may look upon each other again as competitors.

For this is the difference between fathers and mothers. Mothers, having finished their usefulness for their children, may withdraw. The father's life, however, was not centered around his children but around his productivity. Whether it was tilling the soil, or running a factory, or painting pictures, it is not over when the children are grown-up. His work, his productivity, has to be continued for the sake of security and for the sake of achievement. At the soldier's return both—father and son—reach a crossroad. Whether they walk together or oppose each other will depend upon how they meet each other at this new beginning.

Chapter 10

SIBLINGS AND THE VETERANS

We return once again to the trauma of separation and to the fact that whatever this trauma meant for the emotional balance of the family, the members of the family soon resume and continue "life as usual." This is especially true of the siblings of the soldier. The relationship between siblings depends on many factors. In a large family the soldier's relation will be different toward each of his siblings and each of them will respond to his absence in his own way. It would be impossible to undertake a description of all variations, but it may be emphasized anew that, except under extraordinary circumstances, the siblings adapt to the separation much more readily than do the parents and wives.

In our discussion of the adolescent's development in war-time we will indicate the reactions and attitudes of younger brothers and sisters to the fact that one or several members of the family are in the Services. Boys and girls usually derive prestige from this circumstance and compete with their friends with this added self-importance. Boys usually try to identify with the brother who may become a hero. Both boys and girls may respond in their emotional development to their parents' attitude to the son in the Army. The parents may be deeply affected and withdrawn from the other children; or the children may be disturbed by the changes in the home situation caused by war-time conditions. Altogether the development of the adolescent is accelerated. The result of this is that, much sooner than otherwise would have followed, the real emotional contact with the brother in the Service loosens. Boys, while they live fearfully or courageously in expectation that soon their own time will come, rush into many activities, leaving little time and thought for the brother. Likewise the girls become engrossed in their everyday activities and they may feel guilty when they suddenly realize

that they hardly find time to write a letter to the soldier-brother. Their interests are taken up so strongly by their "date tonight," by "the movie that must be seen," and by the work which has to be done. The soldier usually responds to this, especially while overseas, with a good-natured, almost fatherly attitude. He has so great a need to love and to feel mature while he is actually dependent and miserable, that he shows much understanding toward the younger ones. Even if he envies them, his envy is not hostile from the distance, except if the relationship was altogether too pathological. As long as the competition does not become real and too near, the envy, especially toward the younger members of the family, is good-hearted and humorous. The soldier loves the siblings who enjoy what he misses in the hope that he will enjoy the same too, sometime in the future.

The older siblings usually have already established their own family, their work, when the younger ones are at military age. The relationship of the soldier to them is already distant unless it be that the older sister represents a substitute for the mother and the older brother a substitute for the father. The older brothers and sisters will take the soldiering of the younger brother in their stride; they have sympathy and they write letters, but altogether it affects only a small part of their own emotional life which already has its core in their own families. Although an older sister may feel very motherly toward the brother, her feelings toward him recede into the background if, for example, her husband, too, is going into the Service and/or if she has her own children to take care of. Unless the soldier-brother's personality is altogether pathologic, he will not expect it nor wish it otherwise. Normally, he has a helpful sympathetic attitude toward the older sister; he is glad to be able to feel mature toward her and to feel love. This is not quite the same toward the older brothers. If the older brother can remain civilian, the soldier's envy is understandable and often obvious. Older brothers sense this too well and usually they try to alleviate the envy by being especially attentive to the soldier. However, if they feel frustrated in these efforts, they may withdraw with anger and hostility, which forecasts the shadow of the troubles between brothers after the war.

Soldiers cannot usually take in their stride the marriage of a sibling during their absence and especially while they are overseas. Often soldiers pleaded in their letters with all sorts of rationalizations to keep the sister from marrying or responded cynically and with bitterness to the marriage of a brother. Under such circumstances the soldier does not form any emotional attachments to the new member of the family. Photographs and letters do not override his emotional reluctance and thus he may continue to be hostile and distant even after he returns. The motivations of this attitude are evident. If his sister marries, he can envy the new brother-in-law but he cannot accept him; he feels he is the loser. The marriage of a brother who is allowed to love and live his own life while the soldier is in danger demonstrates too painfully his deprivations. If the soldier was married before his siblings married, his reaction may not be so strong. However, they are basically the same; his unrelentingness is a result of his own situation and therefore, the greater his deprivations, the less is his acceptance of the marriage. On the other hand, if the soldier is unmarried, the marriage of a sibling stimulates in him the desire for marriage and thus, with this added pressure, he may rush into a marriage without too much consideration for the future.



Young people change more quickly and more visibly than adults. Many children became adolescents, and adolescents became adults during the absence of the soldier-brother. At his return the differences will be surprising for both—for the soldier as well as his younger but now grown, or almost grown, siblings. He will regret that they grew up without contact and exchange with him and his siblings will not quite, nor immediately, understand why he does not appear so grown, so “adult” to them as he did before he went away to war. As long as he wears his uniform, the prestige of his age and status will be easily maintained. However, after he is in his civilian clothes and he is one of them, his position toward his siblings and theirs toward him change. They will all be aware of this and they will handle each other cagily.

If the younger ones have a feeling for the mood of the soldier and if they, in their own adolescent insecurity, sense his insecurity, they may shyly go out of his way; for they may suddenly feel as if they were guilty for having grown-up, thus jeopardizing his position. If they are less sensitive, they may boisterously demonstrate their newly won, and probably only temporary, superiority; or they may withdraw from the veteran since they may resent that he is unable to enter their life and participate emotionally in it.

Not only the younger siblings of the veteran, but also the older ones may feel helpless toward the unresolved tension which exists between them. Prepared for the "estrangement" between soldiers and civilians, they may try to explain it away as a peculiarity of the veteran. Only rarely do they really understand that the estrangement is a result of a mutual change which developed when they all, soldiers as well as the civilian siblings, lived fully their own separate lives. The siblings, however, may feel guilty for having been able to lead a more comfortable and a more personally gainful life. The depressive mood of the soldier increases their guilt. They try to suppress this feeling and defend themselves against it by recalling how much they did for the soldier; they also try to reassure themselves that they want to do as much or even more for him now that he is a veteran. This is not easy. It can no longer be done by letters and parcels. The brother is present and demanding, sometimes without words and sometimes quite articulately. He may be self-conscious or overbearing; he may be exaggeratedly self-confident or he may be shy; he may show his superiority to his siblings in a punitive manner or he may be sullen and may thwart their efforts at emotional rapprochement. The emotional contact is usually established with the old genuineness only after the conflicts have been brought out in the open and the new grievances aired together with the old ones, for there is always a remnant, ready for outburst, of the old grudge, envy and competition which are always at the origin of the relationship between siblings.¹

Love, as we have shown, grows out of dependent needs. Sib-

¹ David M. Levy: *Sibling Rivalry*, Research Monographs, No. 2, American Orthopsychiatric Association, New York, 1937.

lings, especially those close in age to each other, cannot expect gratification of their dependent needs from each other. Depending equally upon the mother for her attention, for food, care and love, they are actually, at the beginning, competitors with each other. Thus self-assertion is usually the first manifestation of the relationship between siblings. From this, through the process of identification in a great variety of situations, the siblings learned to appreciate each other, even to depend upon each other. This dependence, however, normally is not the same as the biological instinctive need with which the child turns to the mother. Such biological dependence may be transferred to a sibling if the age difference is great enough, if the mother is not present, or if the sibling is too passive and too much in need. These are specific situations. Normally, siblings become dependent upon each other through mutual obligation which is the result of identification between growing personalities. Siblings share with each other their family traditions. They transfer their ideals and loyalties from the small unit of the family to the community and participate in each other's personal ambitions and cultural goals. Thus love between siblings, if normal, becomes sublimated as in friendship; it is a multifarious relationship among equals; it functions well only if there is a mutual exchange, an unconscious give and take between the partners.

As long as the soldier was away from home and idealized by the greatness of his task, he was in a good position in this ever-measured give and take. Even though he was needy in some way, his achievement and his giving were established. He was giving his utmost to the common ideal, to the country and its flag. However, after he comes back, an emotional situation develops between him and his siblings which one can describe, for the sake of convenience and also for its truthfulness, as a case of "have and have-not psychology." The siblings at home are the "haves"; the veterans are the "have nots." Even if this is only a transient situation, it reawakens the original envy; psychodynamically speaking, it activates a regression. The veteran may try to reason with himself, he may try to suppress his feelings; however, his emotional responses become only more involved, and the interaction between the "haves" and "have nots"

more complex, for those who were at home cannot give until he is able to take. The frustration and helplessness evoke in them guilt toward him and fear of him. Thus the same emotional conflict may repeat itself between the sibling and the veteran—now adults—which they acted out innumerable times with each other in their common struggle for adulthood.



It is not difficult to translate the emotional conflicts existing between siblings, conflicts which individually may be repeated within each family, into the language of the motivations at work in all aspects of social and economic life. The soldier's envy of the people at the home-front was often voiced, and the civilians' guilt and fear of the soldier were often used as an argument. Whatever the social and economic consequences of these emotions may be, whatever their justification in the past or their weight for the future, are not our problems here. Our task is to observe and interpret the changes in the emotional reactions between soldiers and civilians and thus we shall record one more of its aspects as it seemed to develop at the close of the war. We refer here to the differences in the emotional and sociological significance between the veteran as an individual and the veterans as a group. For only the former, the single veteran, is exposed to the emotional situation of the "have not." The latter, the veteran as a group, is a power. While still in the Army and not knowing how this power will be made effective, the soldier learned, unconsciously, the significance of the emotions which move the group. Thus while the soldiers were aware of their envy of the civilians and anger toward them (for example, during strikes), actually they would not have wanted to change places with those workers, at least not wholeheartedly. Protected and emotionally reinforced by the group spirit of the Army, they may have known that their position was the more favorable one. The soldier was a "have not" who earned his rights; and he would rather be one of them than one of those whom he and his comrades envied and hated. The civilian men are very much aware of this. They fear the veteran not only as a competitor for jobs or for political power; they fear

him—often with an unconscious, repressed anxiety—because they envy the prestige that the soldier has earned and even more, they envy him because he was not afraid, because he could do what they were unable or afraid of doing.

As long as the war was still in its hard fighting phases, men at home, whether deferred for essential work or because of disability, were too acutely and keenly aware of the fact that they were safe, at least safer, and that they had the easier job. They respected the soldier enough to admire him rather than envy him. When the fighting was about to be over in the European theater of war and the victory won and plans were being made for the return of the soldiers in great numbers, the civilians' fear and envy of the soldier became obvious. The admiration of the accepted heroes of the war, of the aces, crowded the dreams not only of the adolescents; even more did the men dream about the foot-soldier who earned his discharge button. The discharge button became the emblem of virility, and the discharge button of the first World War reappeared in many elderly gentlemen's buttonholes. The glory of military life is revitalized after the danger is over; and those who were not in it envy those who can draw on this prestige. The civilian, thus, is afraid of the soldier not only because he feels guilty toward him but also because he admires him.

It will be a matter of individual difference in what way these two elements are mixed in the civilian's attitude toward the soldier. It will also be a measure of the emotional maturity of every individual veteran, his ability to sail straight between the Scylla of the alluring imagination of power, prestige and virility, and the Charybdis of emotional poverty caused by insecurity and inferiority feelings.

Chapter 11

SOLDIERS AND WIVES

DURING SEPARATION ¹

Of all the interpersonal relationships which the soldier leaves behind and to which he anxiously wants to return, the most important is that to his wife or to the woman he hopes to marry. Important as are the changes in his personality for his mother and for other members of his family, still more important are they to his wife. Nobody can be more affected by his fate than the woman who is, or may be, his partner for life. Thus, we will devote a large part of our discussion to the emotional attitude of women, to the contemporaries, married or unmarried, of the soldier during war-time.

December 7, 1941; it seems so far away now! However, we still can recall that Sunday afternoon when war became inevitable. Many women reacted to the news instantly with an acute anxiety. To them it was immediately clear that the attack meant war and war meant separation from the husband, lover or fiancé; not only separation but a waiting filled with anxiety, worry, fear, uncertainty and doubt.

I would like to dwell on one instance at some length—that of a woman whose response was so acute in the early days of the war and whose adaptation to the changes brought about by war is more or less representative of that of the majority of married women of middle-class society. With the news of the attack, she immediately assumed—and had reason to do so—that her husband would enlist and be called and that he would be in service as an officer. She felt at the time, for sundry reasons, that he would not be in danger; still her instant response was anxiety. That night, the night of Pearl Harbor, she dreamed that she,

¹ *Women in Wartime*, Institute for Psychoanalysis, Chicago, 1943.

her child and her husband were playing with friends at a peaceful picnic. Yet in the second part of the dream she felt: "I was mothering my younger brother as well as my daughter with the feeling that I was warding off evil, the malignant thing." As if the struggle with the "malignant thing" was unfinished and its outcome in suspense, she awakened from the dream feeling sick. The colitis, nausea and ill feeling which she experienced were almost enough to keep her in bed, thus to avoid responsibility. But not quite; she got up and went about her duties, struggling with a sense of fatigue—as if not ready to face what was awaiting her. It was as if she were pleading with destiny to let the world be as peaceful as on a picnic and to let herself be with no other duty than her motherliness. This motherliness should ward off the evil which was to come. The concern for her husband did not appear in the dream, it was part of the "malignant thing" which should be warded off without being even expressed. The repression of the anxiety, the internal struggle, precipitated the acute psychosomatic reactions.

In the next few days, she, too, had to admit and accept the reality of the war. She could not ward it off any longer. Her anxiety was accentuated, she felt helpless and very dependent. She dreamed, now, that she was sitting at a table with an older brother of her husband and serving supper for little children—and she had several in the dream. In this dream, as we see, she has accepted the fact, or tried to accept it, that her husband was away. But there is a substitute for him—one of his older brothers. Thus she is able to fulfil her motherly role calmly; her own dependence is being satisfied too.

But this was "just a dream," a wish which did not alter the fact that her security was being threatened. She was very anxious about this and rebelled against the war. She protested with vehemence and bitterness: "I don't feel that liberty is worth any sacrifice. My security is threatened. I cannot give up my way of life. I want the world to avoid fighting." And added: "I don't like to be left behind in a woman's world."

This woman expressed several, almost all the emotional reasons for woman's rebellion against the war, in which she loses importance and has to take a second place. She would be left

behind ; she would have to wait ; her sexuality, as well as her dependent needs, would be frustrated. The more she realized this, the more urgently she felt the need to be dependent on her husband, to cling to him. And at this point she added : "I don't have any fight in me at all," and this defeatist statement was followed immediately by, "I am sure that I don't have gall bladder trouble. I am just anxious."

It must be stressed that this was not a passive woman, functioning solely within the circle of her immediate family ; in addition to the responsibilities evolving from marriage, she was carrying on a professional career. Ordinarily she was not an unusually anxious person. Yet the beginning of the war activated her self-defense and anxiety and this had an important function : it prepared her well for what was to come. After her husband's enlistment, she established her household near the camp where he was in training. During this time, her marriage was happier, more fulfilled than ever before. It was not merely the uniform and the threatening separation that made him dearer to her ; even more it was his ability to stand up well under the strain of the training and under the demands of Army life which increased her admiration for him. He was demonstrating that he was a stronger man than she had ever seen him to be. This period of renewed love helped her during the period of his overseas duty.

This is one example of many. Women responded with an anxiety which was individually different in degree and in expression. In its motivations, this anxiety was different from the emotional response of mothers to the separation from their son. The wife's anxiety, in this acute phase, was not motivated by a fear for the husband who will be in danger ; it was related to her self, which was endangered by the separation. Many women responded with asthma, with thyrotoxicosis, merely to the fear of separation which they slowly mastered—like the women we have discussed—by the time the separation occurred. Actually, this anxiety for one's self is the reactivation of dependent needs, the universal reaction to separation, and is in keeping with woman's normal relationship to man.

Naturally not all women responded to the onset of the war in

this way. A young divorcée's first reaction was a sort of grandiose mourning. In spite of her political awareness, her understanding of the issues seemed to recede the moment war became a reality. She did not need to worry about any one individual closely related to her, but her personality make-up was such that she felt interested in all the young men and wanted to be loved by all. Thus she felt herself to be the loser. Her response was not an increased dependence upon one man but the realization of the loss of many men. So she could not see anything in the war but a mass incarnation of young men being burned to death on the altar of power politics. She did not feel anxiety and increased dependence, but mourning and pity. It is interesting and even pertinent in this connection to note that this narcissistic woman hated uniforms so much; although she herself could have enlisted in the Auxiliary Services, and she even pondered about it, she never could bring herself to it; nor was she interested in men in uniform. The uniform for her meant mainly the manifestation of an hierarchy, an existing power greater than any individual power could be; she was afraid of it. The men in uniform "would not belong to her" but to the Army; and she herself, wearing a uniform, would not belong to herself. Something and somebody would have power over her; she was afraid of this and avoided it.

Just the opposite of this attitude is the reaction of another type of narcissistic woman; of those whose personality is masculine and whose competition with the man is always present or very easily activated. There were many women who envied their husbands' masculine prerogative of going to war; there were many who were very angry with themselves when they realized their dependent needs. One woman, for example, while waiting for the enlistment procedure of her husband took a civilian flying course which, so she fantasied, would enable her to ferry planes across the oceans, thus giving her a more important job in the war than her husband might have. Demanding the attention of the family with her sensational plans, she suppressed and at the same time she also satisfied her obvious dependent needs—her fear of being left alone.

The universal response to separation is anxiety, and with it

comes a regressive emotional state which is expressed mainly by the manifestations of dependence. In women the mood created by dependence is very closely connected with the manifestations of motherliness. The mother's tenderness toward her child is the repetition of her own dependence on her mother during childhood. If she received tenderness she can give it. If she feels in need of tenderness and has the confidence that she will receive it, she can easily feel tender and motherly toward the man upon whom she is dependent. This is the psychodynamic explanation of the phenomenon that the wife in her anxious, dependent mood usually acts with motherly tenderness toward her husband. This is what usually happens if the marriage has any reliable emotional content. The husband who is threatened by the necessity of going into the Service is afraid; he does not know how he will "take it." He can hardly express and he can hardly let himself know of this doubt about himself. However, he is all the more aware of this threat to his ego since he does know that in the Army his virility will be exposed to scrutiny. In the emotional situation of the impending separation, while both husband and wife lean on each other, the woman has the easier task; nobody will force her to live an Army life and nobody will criticize her if she is dependent and in need of love. In this security if she has any adult motherliness in her personality, her dependent attitude will change to a tender, motherly attitude toward her husband. A woman, married for twelve years when the military duty of her husband came up, told me, "I never loved him so much as I did when I saw him scared and worried." This woman idealized her husband as a man without fear and always masculine. Suddenly the mask fell; she saw the man who needed her to undo his fear. She loved him for this but with another love. Her tenderness grew with his needs for her. She had two children who also needed her and this helped her to overcome her own fear and dependence. He, reassured in his own importance and virility through her understanding, did not need to be weak any longer. Thus her appreciation of him awakened his desire to be strong again for her. This is the way in which the emotional needs of the partners maintain the equilibrium within marriage. Such responsiveness to each other's emotional needs

affords a harmonious interpersonal relationship; it also stimulates the personal growth in husband and wife.

In another marriage, the emotional situation was more complex. In everyday life the wife was a fearful, anxious neurotic person. The husband was a tall, dark man who, for his looks, was often taken for a gangster. She knew, and he too was aware that of the two of them, she was the more ambitious person; he was aware of his weakness as compared with the strength of other men. After he was drafted, he told her he did not believe that he wanted to become a good soldier. She explained to him the advantages of being one. After he was inducted, he telephoned every evening and, with each call, told her that he was coming home A.W.O.L. His wife reassured him, giving him understanding love and at the same time insisting firmly that he hold out and make a good showing; she actually handled him as if she were a good mother. He finished his basic training successfully. His wife then followed him and took a job in the town near his camp. This was the happiest period of their marriage. After he left for the Pacific assigned to boat duty, she returned to Chicago. The emotional conflict which she developed later will interest us in another context. At the moment it is important to recognize that this woman, besides her chronic dependence, had a strong motherly attitude toward her husband which worked for the advantage of both. The war made it possible for her to express it more richly and for him to accept it graciously.

There are, of course, women whose personalities do not permit an intensification of their motherliness when their own dependent needs are acutely activated. Their own insecurity is so deep that the threat of separation leaves them with an anxiety hard to repair. For example, the woman of whom we now speak was very much aware of the state of the war and, on the basis of sincere convictions, not only believed that democracy was worth fighting for but also wanted her husband to do his share in the fight. Still she was quite tense while her husband's enlistment in the Navy was being processed, and after he was commissioned and left, she said with bitterness, "I hate the Navy; the Navy swallowed him." Although she realized that she her-

self wished what had occurred, the feeling that her husband's allegiance now belonged to the Navy and only secondarily to her, left her with a sense of frustration. She felt as though she were looking for her husband, seeking him out from among thousands of men in order to tell him a trivial matter to keep up the contact with him. In this case, again, the husband's attitude, his apparent maturity, his ability to do his duty and still have enough love and consideration for his wife, helped her. She admired him for his attitude, her love for him increased and so eventually also her enthusiasm for the Navy with which her husband was identified.



Separation threatens the continuity of the relationship. Although the wife may respond in the beginning with anxiety and regression, restitution will follow soon if she has the capacity for love and for motherliness. Motherliness in this sense includes not only a tender, protective attitude toward the husband but also the *emotional aptitude for waiting*. Waiting in its psychodynamic sense is a capacity for integrating the psychic household for the achievement of postponed gratification in spite of the frustration of immediate needs. Every woman whose husband was about to enter the Army had to prepare herself to practice this virtue of waiting. It is natural, however, that even those women who are capable of such love tried to postpone the separation for their own as well as for their husband's sake as long as it was possible. Many women gave up their usual households and comfort and followed their husbands to Army camps. In spite of the inconveniences of their everyday life, they often describe this period as one of the happiest during their marriage. Husband and wife, both freed from their usual environment, concentrate emotionally upon each other; their love for each other is enhanced by the fear of loss, by the shortness of the time and by the realization that their fate is not in their own hands. The orders may come at any time and if they come they both will suffer from the separation. Under such emotions the appreciation for each other grows. War-time separation necessarily brings the thought of possible death, too, into the con-

sciousness. Thus every aspect of the relationship takes on a deeper meaning and importance.

Fear of the unknown and unfathomable permits the husband to express and to impose demands which he would not indulge in normal times, and the wife tries to gratify them so that she will not be left behind to wait with a sense of guilt and self-reproach. In many ways the days of the "last furlough" are lived as a sort of ritual. As in the case of serious illness the family does the best they can in order to avoid guilty feelings should death occur, so the wife, even more than other members of the family, lavishes conspicuously all the signs of love and appreciation upon the husband before separation. This often serves the purpose of protecting her from the ghost of a haunting conscience. Lonesomeness one can bear, but guilt feelings, especially while the husband may be in danger, cannot be endured without anxiety. Thus, the giving attitude of the wife often becomes an overdraft on her resources of real love. Having suppressed her need for attention, she becomes tense, and begins to envy her husband who receives so many expressions of love not only from her but also from his friends and from his family. It has been observed in many instances that, though the wife felt and knew no limits to her love for her husband, she resented the attentions he received from others and expressed her feelings in angry, hostile scenes. This jealousy, however, was not the expression of a desire to zealously guard their privacy against intrusion by others; it was the expression of her envy of her husband. She felt that she, too, needed the attention of her family and of her friends to enrich herself in order to be able to continue loving him. This occurs often even with women whose capacity for love is not neurotically damaged. They, too, are hurt and complain that they and their achievements are taken too much for granted; they are afraid that while their family does not show any overt appreciation, the husband will also forget how much strain and concentration will be needed in taking care of his home and children and in waiting for his return. This fear is necessarily much more painful and acute in women who are unsure of their own love and therefore need steady reassurances of the husband's love.

The men, before leaving for the Army or for overseas, do not behave toward their family in their usual way. In this exceptional situation the husband is so concerned with himself that he does not even notice that he is getting all the attention; he is not aware that his wife begins to feel neglected, forgotten and becomes jealous. A veteran told me of the "shock" he experienced with the first letter from his wife at the port of embarkation. He had lived for ten days a completely self-centered life within his family; he had felt secure and satisfied; he had felt no doubts about his love, about his marriage. This first letter began, "Perhaps you never did love me," and he was awakened to the fact that, even though he was going to war, even though he was feeling a greater need for love than before, his wife demanded reassurance of his love. The husband now, sure of his own love, could understand his wife's needs much less than he did before. Only much later did he recognize that her questioning his love, her doubts about his love expressed her insecurity and uncertainty about her own love.

This clamoring for reassurances about the husband's love, this anxious dependence of the wife, is motivated by the same personality disturbance which we described in connection with the overprotective and the possessive mother's reactions to separation from the son. Here, as there, the desire for continuous contact is intensified by a fear that one will be unable to restore the relationship if once interrupted; that deprived of the immediate, physical presence of the love object, love itself will vanish. These women sense that their love will fade away if it is not nourished by continuous gratification and by the opportunity to make daily restitution. For them separation is more than physical and geographical distance; it means the loss of a part of one's self. No wonder the exaggerated and neurotic reaction to the threat of separation!

A young wife of a soldier who had been married three years responded to the impending separation with an acute panic. Consciously, her concerns were related to her husband; she felt that she could not bear the idea of his leaving since he needed protection—as a baby would need a mother. But this feeling alone could not explain the panic which rendered her so helpless

or the immediacy with which she submitted and surrendered herself to the panic. Soon it became clear that she was obsessed by the idea that her husband had no existence outside of the one with her. She felt that he would be harmed, annihilated, if her love could not nourish his existence. And without his physical presence she, too, would be annihilated. So great a role did identification with him play in her love for him! Thus separation for her meant destruction not only to her love and marriage, but also to the very physical existence of both persons involved. This highly pathologic case demonstrates an emotional mechanism which is operative universally, of course, with various degrees of intensity: the diminishing love activates the destructive tendencies and therefore, depending upon the specific responses to one's destructiveness, the diminishing love is accompanied by guilt and/or anxiety. Thus separation becomes traumatic for those women who cannot continue loving without immediate restitution of their love in and by continuous contact with the love object.

In contrast, there were many marriages in which war-time separation presented no problem since the continuation of the relationship was meaningless. In many instances husband and wife actually welcomed the war-time separation as a relief; their relationship had become such that they now could graciously cut the ties of everyday routine. In other marriages the separation had taken place before the war. Deserted wives often used the draft as a tool of their revenge. Social agencies report cases in which such embittered wives tried to enlist their aid to bring about the draft of an unfaithful and undependable husband. Often it happened that these women later felt conflictful and very guilty, especially when they realized that their hostile wishes were actually endangering the husband's life. There were also marriages in which the wife became financially independent during war-time and thus felt a greater strength, courage and confidence to shake off the yoke of an unhappy marriage. And we may include in this list those marriages in which the separation had been a trauma, yet the wife emancipated herself quickly from her husband and entered another relationship since she could not live without sexual gratification.

After separation, *letters* represent the tangible means of contact. The function of the letter is the same for the husband in the Army as for the wife at home. There is no doubt about the meaning of the letters for the soldier; we know they support his ego in many ways. Letters bring to him the intellectual and emotional expressions of the person who plays such an important role in his life. They stimulate his fantasy, his memory, and thus permit him the continuation of the relationship which he strives to preserve. His wife, however, is in need of similar support and emotional help and for similar purposes. She, too, needs to retrieve the past and she, too, needs to continue the relationship with him; and for this she wants to live with him in her fantasy. Imagination must have material. Her husband, although far away, can imagine her life, because it had been a part of his; she, however, needs information from him to be able to imagine his life. The war-time restrictions, the necessary censorship are hard on the soldier but also hard on his wife. "Since I cannot write to you where I am, what I see and what I do, letter-writing becomes a chore," wrote probably more than one soldier. The wife feels frustrated by this and her frustration is greater only when she does not get letters at all. For the thesis "no news is good news" may be a consolation but does not help in the lack of contact; without it she feels emotionally empty.

Even the mail-carrier shares her disappointment when he almost apologizes that he could not bring her the letter she was waiting for. The repetition of the let-down of hopes day after day, "the letterless mood,"² is a strain on the woman and becomes also a threat to the marriage. His letters bring home to her his personality and a part of his present life; they enliven the everyday routine which has to go on without him. His letters quicken her dreams, give color to her fantasies and this is not only what she wants but also what she needs. Without his letters she feels excluded from his life. Burdened by worries for his safety, she becomes afraid of her growing weariness of giving substance to their relationship which now

² Fred Howard: *Whistle While You Wait*, Duell, Sloan & Pierce, New York, 1945

seems to elude her. Her imagination of him, and of their marriage, becomes vague.

In many instances where the men were unable to write letters, unable to articulate their feelings, this lack played an important role in the woman's maladjustment. Many women easily regress from that level of psychological integration which is necessary for waiting. If the letters do not come or if they are not adequate to her emotional needs, her disappointment evokes in her the feeling that "he does not care." From then on, it will depend upon the strength of the ego and/or upon the actual temptation when the waiting may appear senseless and she may feel free to seek male companionship again.

Letters in war-time fulfil a deep emotional need but in another way than letters in peace-time. The distance is too great, the time of exchanging responses too long, the experiences too unlike to be bridged by words. Even the most articulate letters cannot span the two worlds in which each lives separately. Rather it seems that the opposite is true. No matter how close they would like to be to each other, how much trust and confidence they have in each other, their letters will reveal—just because of that—the gap between their experiences. And it is good when they both know and understand that it cannot be otherwise. A young woman learned this with surprise. She and her husband were capable of and used to conveying their emotional experiences to each other with great sensitivity of expression. She had pleasure in writing to her husband about her intensive sexual desire for him. She was expecting his answer to her passionate love letter to correspond to the intensity of her own. She was amazed and troubled when she received his answer from one of the Pacific Islands saying, "You are in a place where life and sex are normal; here it has no meaning," and he went on to explain his feelings about death and the sense and senselessness of the war. Another young woman wrote to her husband with great enthusiasm about her civic activities, expecting him, who used to encourage her, to answer with great interest. It was after the Battle of the Bulge when he received this letter. He answered with a bitter cynicism which was very disconcerting to her. The examples could be continued endlessly.

Letters in war-time are not, or only rarely can be, answers to civilian feelings and situations. At most, the letters of a soldier can convey to his wife his feelings and thoughts about a world which she always will know of only from hearsay; but not more can be expected. The function of letters in war-time is to give information about the respective situations of husband and wife through which they can enrich their image of each other. There always remains a grain of frustration and even these little frustrations may add up to real disappointment. When one receives letters which are no answers to the expectation one may easily take this as a sign of estrangement and wives as well as husbands may become concerned.

Even if the moods expressed in letters are not always in pace they usually contain a reassurance of love. Husbands and wives mutually try to prove to each other and to themselves their desire and need for each other. The wife has not only worry for her husband, she is also proud of him and she usually has a genuine desire to admire him. "I can't quite get on paper what I want to say to you but the knowledge of what you are doing is so breath taking, so terrible, and so wonderful that I can't, without prelude, just tell you how it goes with us at home and what the Peter Pan school is doing," writes Janet to Fred in "Whistle While You Wait." And in another letter she writes, "It is another morning and I begin to despair of ever again writing a letter that is good enough for a boy in a foxhole." This is an articulate expression of the wife's sense of helplessness when she is filled with consciousness that for him and for her nothing matters at present, for it is "to be or not to be."



The woman who is waiting for her husband without abandoning her loyalty lives under the strong pressure of her super-ego, of the ideal which she wants to fulfil in her marriage. Her conscience is much stronger in this respect than her husband's or fiancé's while he is away. The psychodynamics of this are easily understood. The soldier overseas is suffering from insecurity, deprivation and actual danger; he trains himself in abandoning the ego-ideals instilled in him by training and tradi-

tion. He is away from home not for pleasure but under compelling circumstances. He does what he has to do, not for his own good, but for the good of his country. When, exhausted by such conditions, he has opportunity for relaxation he may enjoy it with the feeling that he has already squared his bill with his super-ego; he can easily take his pleasures where he can. He may easily reconcile his conscience with his sexual infidelity since he feels that his actions are isolated from his civilian life; it does not need to disturb, so he feels, his marriage and his civilian relationships. His wife has none of this "double standard." However, it is not he, the husband, who deprived her, through his authority or through extorted pledges and promises, of her sexual freedom. Even if her immediate environment acted as the guardian of traditional behavior, this represents only the external manifestations of her own internal veto. What made this internal prohibition so strong—stronger during the war than before? This may sound surprising considering what one reads about women's behavior every day in the newspapers. Yet, while being impressed by such accounts we should not forget that the majority of women are those who do not come into the newspaper accounts and whose behavior is regulated by the strongly prohibitive attitude of their own morals. The fact that the country as a whole was saved, that it remained "civilian" as a whole, put the women under such a pressure of their conscience. In comparing herself in her civilian comfort with the deprivations of her husband, she feels that the only real contribution she can make is to consolidate her loyalty, and by this, her marriage.

However, the pressure of such a super-ego exhausts the ego. The ego needs pampering and gratification. Even in a not completely happy marriage, sexuality and a continuous response between husband and wife gives nourishment to her ego. When she is alone, she misses affection as well as the exchange of many details that they have in common. Children represent the link between husband and wife; even if she is convinced that what she does for her children is also for her husband, carrying the responsibility as well as the work alone may be exhausting. To this is added the lack of sexual gratification. Letters received

and written, memories and fantasies may stir up the urge; and many of these women feel guilty merely for having sexual urge. It is the work of art to describe the phases and variations of such struggle and they should not be presented as a case history. If the woman succeeded in her struggle against opportunities and temptations, if she saved herself untouched for the continuation of her marriage, her emotional balance may become similar to that of a person who suffered, who brought a sacrifice. Her ego shows the traces of deprivation; it is impoverished for the sake of future gratification, for the stability of her marriage. The triumph of her super-ego is achieved at the cost of the same kind of precarious internal balance which soldiers reached as a result of their deprivations. Thus a further burden—be it external or internal—may activate neurosis, or even psychosis.

The neuroses of these women are "civilian neuroses" in their structure; however, in many ways we may compare them with the battle fatigue of the soldier. Her battle is fought within herself as a conflict between her sexual (and emotional) needs and her internal prohibition.

Richard K. was a Marine overseas for a long time; but not as long as his buddy, David P., who was sent home on rotation. Overcoming the natural envy and probably identifying himself with the returning comrade, Richard told David to visit his wife and tell her everything about him. She certainly would love to talk with somebody who had shared the foxholes with him. So David did. He and Mrs. K. talked long about Richard and about the life in New Guinea. Then conversation became more and more personal. Probably the contours of the individuals playing in this drama began to fade away. Perhaps David forgot that he was not Richard and Mrs. K. made herself believe that he was. They ended in sexual intercourse. Mrs. K., however, was not able to face herself after this act. The psychiatrist met her when she was brought into the hospital in an acute manic episode.

A manic episode with all its boldness and verbal aggression is just the reverse of a depression; it is motivated by the denial of guilt. The fate of Mrs. K. is not unique. However, it does not always end in such an acute psychotic episode. Did she love her

husband so much? Or did she love herself so much that after she became "unclean" she could not reconcile her action with her self-esteem? To us it seems that the latter was the case. The ideals which one wants to realize are created in one's self; one loves one's self if one is capable of approaching the ideal and hates one's self if the ideal was betrayed through one's own fault. Women who live by such a code have the awareness that they will not forgive their own weakness and thus are more afraid of the torturing depression than of the husband's response to their sexual infidelity. Psychiatrists, social workers, but even more often ministers are asked for advice by the women who feel that they are getting toward the end of their rope. Women, aware of the sexual desire in themselves and of the temptation which a man's sexual desire means for them, come for advice. Sometimes they come with an unconscious desire to ask for permission to do the very thing they want to avoid; other times they really come for help, for reassurance in their own strength; and very often such reassurance restores self-confidence and enables the woman to avoid the temptation.

There are many women who in such conflict cannot turn to anyone but to their husbands; they feel that the husband should protect them and their marriage since his knowing may be enough to protect her from the temptation to play with fire. Thus she may write to him about her desire, she may confess her fantasies; she wants to give herself into his hands—he is the man, he should be the master and the protector. This idealization of the husband may help the wife to avoid temptation. However, it often makes the husband unhappy, insecure and jealous. He does not feel as sure of his power over his wife as his wife wants him to be, in her subdued dependence.

There are women whose psychological defense against sexual temptation is so intense that they cannot admit the nature of their needs; they cannot fight it on the open level of consciousness; they have to suppress the sexual need and respond with acute anxiety to the internal danger.

A woman of thirty, mother of two children and wife of a soldier who was in the Pacific, asked for help because she had felt increasingly restless and upset since her husband left. Lately

she had been afraid of becoming mentally ill; she had a sense of impending doom, that something might happen for which she could not account. Further exploration revealed that her anxiety did not include her husband, she was not worried that something might happen to him; he was in a safe place; the doom of the family, she feared, would not come through mishap to him but through herself. She could not go to a window without acute panic; she was afraid to touch knives in the kitchen; she was panic-stricken by the idea that she might do something terrible to her children. The children appeared a burden to her—too much work and responsibility to carry alone. She was not in bad financial circumstances; she had help and members of her husband's family could help her too. However, she hated the family of her husband. She assumed that they hated her. "They will take away my husband from me, I am certain they write to him about me," she complained. Her behavior was exaggerated. What was the reason for this hostility and fear? She was apparently afraid of losing her husband; she bombarded him with letters asking for his love and help in this struggle with his family. Only after all the details of the family constellation were evaluated did the patient mention, as if by chance, that her husband had a brother; she had always found him "fun." He was wounded, and had come back several months ago. The patient did not realize the nature of her interest in him until she had a dream, a dream which revealed her sexual interest in her brother-in-law. Although she was always easily depressed, she dated her acute disturbance from this dream. Since then she had suppressed her feelings and avoided her family. In her guilt she expected the punishment to come from the mother-in-law. For not only did she marry her oldest and favorite son, but now she was dissatisfied with him and wanted to be in love with the younger son. This was an unheard-of sin in the tradition of this family, of this woman. She suspected her mother-in-law of knowing everything and of telling it to her husband and in this way punishing her. In this situation her children appeared to be the barrier to any future sexual happiness. Thus her hostility turned toward them, increasing her guilt. The suppression of the sexual desire activated her hos-

tility, and the resulting destructive impulses endangered her seriously.

It is always surprising to see how the acceptance of the suppressed tendency resolves the conflict. And here we shall explain what *acceptance* means. Acceptance, the realization that a desire is a part of one's personality, does not signify that it has to be followed by direct gratification. Generally, the opposite is true. If an individual could permit herself the gratification of the sexual impulse without fearing the punishment of her super-ego, she would not develop panic. It is a decisive factor in the therapeutic process of such a case that the patient feel confident that the therapist will not push her into the dangers of the impulse but will protect her from it. Only with the help of such protection can she concede that the tendency which makes her feel guilty is a part of her personality; thus she may accept it without destroying herself by punishment.

We do not want to discuss the variations of the neurotic conditions caused by the internal struggle against sexual temptation. However, we have to emphasize that this struggle leaves the ego exhausted and that it causes various regressive manifestations. Some women feel anxious and unable to stay alone; others become so dependent that they do not shy away from any means to be protected: as if they have to be rescued. By the nature of the conflict, only the husband can be the rescuer since he can give gratification and can protect her from temptation. Such women feel that no duty can be compelling enough, no cause great enough to expose them to the dangers of lonesomeness, anxiety and neurosis. Thus they wrote letters which made their husbands come home, even A.W.O.L.; some exaggerated their children's sickness in order to bring the husband home, or developed psychosomatic conditions themselves serious enough to justify a dependency discharge. In these instances the wives actually refused to make an adjustment to separation. In the rigidity of their dependent personalities they represent the counterpart to some of those neurotic men who could not adjust to Army life and had to be discharged. The problems created by these women have great social importance. All Red Cross workers and social workers know about the work involved in securing

dependency discharges for husbands, or in finding a solution for the wife should the Army refuse a discharge. But discharge and resumption of marriage alone, as we will learn later, do not solve the problems created by these women's dependence.

In this context we discussed the function of dependence as a protection against sexual temptation. However, one more aspect of the personality of these women should be pointed out: these are women who, while denying the importance of sexuality, do not dare to expose themselves to temptation since they are afraid of sexual failure. Women who feel secure and self-assured in their sexual attractiveness usually do not behave so helplessly without their husbands as do those women who feel inferior in this respect. The "erotic woman"—to use the term of Helene Deutsch³—may struggle to ward off the temptations; she may succeed or she may fail in this struggle but she is willing to take a chance of being without her husband. The sexually inhibited woman is the one who clings with desperate dependence on her husband, on the man who gave her the security of marriage and by this the reassurance that she is successful as a woman. Yet, these women rarely admit how great a part sexuality plays in their dependence. These women usually talk about sexuality as not existing for them, they are usually self-righteous in their attitude toward sexuality, toward the women who are more frank and more direct; they are often ready to condemn those who are so "weak" or so "bad" that they cannot preserve their marriage untouched.



There are women as well as men who are unable to ward off their sexual needs and who submit to their urgency. In discussing *the problems of sexual infidelity* in war-time, we will attempt to distinguish among its motivations; we want to relate them to the structure and duration of the marriage, to the personality of the individuals involved, and to their interpersonal relation within the marriage.

The motivations of sexual infidelity are relatively easy to un-

³ Helene Deutsch: *The Psychology of Women*, Vol. I, Grune & Stratton, Inc., New York, 1944.

derstand in "war marriages." These marriages, brought about under the pressure of fear and insecurity, were interrupted before the personalities actually could develop their loyalty by identification with each other. We may say that the marital partners often did not even know each other well enough to distinguish the relationship within marriage from any other sexual attraction which they may have experienced. Usually both the men and the women were young, actually still only in the process of their adolescent maturation. In another context, we will show that some aspects of adolescence appear accelerated while others are delayed; in many cases it remains arrested on a stage of bisexual eroticism; many girls seek gratification very much on the same terms as men used to do. As long as they are not married they may change freely the object of their love, writing letters, dating and having courtships with as many men as they want to, in the hope that sometime they will make the right choice. Very often, however, they say "yes" to the first man who attracted them and if separation threatens, the only security seems to be in marriage. The marriage is based on a need for each other but the need is superficial, created by the war and not by a tested response to each other's personality. Very often the only security for the continuation of the relationship is in having a child.

It happens often that the mere fact of the sexual relationship with (or without) pregnancy results in further maturation of the young woman's personality. In the light of such maturation she may realize that she does not love her husband or she may find that she will respond in another and deeper sense to another man. If this actually occurs as a result of maturation, her struggle to clarify the problem of her loyalty will be a serious one. It occurred, however, in war-time marriages more often than in marriages better founded, that the maturation which is expected in marriage does not follow; that in spite of the marriage, or even in spite of motherhood, emotionally the woman remains an adolescent, seeking gratification by immediate response to any attraction. Since the identification with her husband could not develop, it is easy to understand that these women rarely feel guilty for extramarital relationships. Their attitude may change when they realize that their young husband clings to the mar-

riage with all his fantasy for romance. However, very often women have only little evidence of this; letters come rarely; if they come they are not articulate about their relationship, or if they are, the wives may feel guilty, rejected or rebuked; and all this may be used as rationalization, if such is necessary, to accept the man who is actually present, and to forget the fantasy with the one who lives in another world.

War-time infidelity has another significance in marriages which had lasted several years before separation occurred. We may say that the "romance" in those marriages was already over; that those marriages had another content, based upon the identification between the marital partners and the commonness of their goals and ambitions. We stated that many marriages appeared to be better during separation since the lack of everyday friction permitted husband and wife to idealize each other again, thus to rejuvenate the romance. There were also many instances where just the opposite happened. The separation, the lack of everyday exchange of routine activities and interests, made them realize that their marriage had become empty, impoverished of content. This may happen to the husband as well as to the wife and it is almost fortunate if it happens to both at the same time. The geographical separation alone helps them to achieve emancipation. Very often the wife's interest for another man or the husband's for another woman is just an accelerating factor for a process which was in preparation for a long time.

It often happens that a man realizes only in war-time what he did not notice in the routine of a settled bourgeois existence, that his wife cannot or is unwilling to participate in his life. In the Army he may need help which he did not need before. Several men realize with shock that their wives loved their prestige, their social standing rather than themselves as persons, for it becomes clear that she cannot love him as a "nobody," as a G. I. in a foxhole. At other times, women, in order to maintain the love for their husbands, have to idealize their war-time activities. As long as the wife can imagine him in a foxhole or on a difficult flying exploit, the reality of the danger keeps her fear and also her fantasy busy and her ambitions satisfied. However, if his

duty is without glamour and without danger, the uniformity of his days affects his wife also. Once when a young woman was talking vivaciously about her "week-end," she was asked where her husband was. She answered with a movement of her hand brushing away all conflicts, "He is in no danger; he is in the Fiji Islands." He was in one of the outposts far away from everything he used to live with. His wife was writing to him but she was not worried, she was bored. She felt, even if she did not express it in so many words, that her own lonesomeness was as important and as worthy of sympathy as his. She began to feel that he did not add to her life and resented it, as if it were his fault. Even if the woman knows that it is not so, she may begin to compare him with others; and it works out to his disadvantage. The husband far away senses this very clearly. He himself feels somehow defeated, his ambitions thwarted while his days pass without any special achievement or success which would make him important. He resents her lack of participation in his life, although he knows that there is so little to participate in. Thus the conflict between husband and wife becomes greater. It depends upon chance when she will meet a man who promises romance, and she may fall in love with him. But, in the same way, opportunity may bring about his meeting a girl who does not look upon him as a failure, whose desires and ambitions he may fulfil and then he may turn away from his wife. The new love promises to both a satisfaction of their hurt ego.

Such things happen often. The war-time separation, the interruption of the established continuity, speeds up in both partners the realization of the wants of their marriage; it brings out insufficiencies which were covered by the gratifications of everyday life and suppressed by the conventions of their immediate environment. If it is the man who demands the separation while his wife kept the "home fires burning" our sympathy is usually with the wife. If it happens to the husband, especially while he is overseas, then we and his comrades, especially, will say that she "stabbed him in the back." For always, and for everybody, while in love or even after love has disappeared, it is a bitter experience to know that one is not loved any more. It is humiliating to be not needed, to cease to be a part of the

other person's life, while the other has still remained a part of one's self. The ego, being so devaluated, loses its goal. It has no love-object who would appreciate its efforts. "There is nothing to live for," say the women "There is nothing to fight for," say the men. If he is a soldier, and he is in war, usually he will have little ego-strength left to master his fears in battle.

Acute disappointment in love has always been recognized as motivation for mental disorder, for emotional breakdown. Women being more dependent, for biological as well as for sociological reasons, on men's evaluation of their personality, under normal circumstances succumb more readily to depression after being deserted than men do. Therefore women, unconsciously afraid of being abandoned, try to avoid such great dependence on one man, even if they are married to him. Living alone, such a woman will easily select a substitute lover in the hope that while he will save her from disappointment, he will not disturb her marriage because he will not become so important to her. However, it does not always work as one figured it out. A sexual relationship which lasts for any length of time always has importance for the woman, however much she may try to deny this. Wives and husbands may even have agreed that their war-time sexual life could be kept apart from their marriage; but, probably, they will soon find out that they were deceiving themselves. The wife may have difficulties in reestablishing sexual and emotional contact with her husband. Her husband, even if he were willing to accept the situation, usually will resent it. Sometimes he thinks that it will relieve his own conscience. Yet after the turmoil of readjustment is over, both husband and wife may realize that the basis of their marriage has been endangered.



Sexual freedom is a dangerous liberty for women since its consequences rebound upon them mainly. We already have spoken of its emotional aftermath which the woman cannot escape and which will complicate her future. Her life is even more burdened should pregnancy ensue. In another context we shall discuss woman's great desire for pregnancy during war-time,

and this holds true even in extramarital relationships. Even if we assume that there were many abortions, still it is quite surprising how many women carried their illegitimate pregnancies to full term. After the child was born they had to face the reality of the situation which is often unfavorable for the mother as well as for the child. The mothers as well as social agencies often felt that the best solution was to place the child for adoption. A bill was proposed in California to the effect that adoption papers be obtainable without the husband's signature. The motivation of the bill was to protect the illegitimate child. When this proposal was drawn to the attention of the soldiers, they interpreted it as if the bill would want to protect not only the illegitimate child but also the wife from the husband's wrath. Although the bill was not passed, it gives an indication of the dangers of sexual liberty.

Taking care of an infant is a continuous task which interferes with the mother's freedom. There were many children—illegitimate and legitimate—who were not well taken care of by their mothers. Children were left to be taken care of by another child or by neighbors, for hours and even for days. Children were abandoned—some mothers put the infant out in the hope that some one would rescue it; others were capable of murdering the unwanted baby. Many women do not want to harm the child at all; they just want to have time for companionship, for drinking, gambling or dancing. The increase of adultery cases brought court proposals for punishment. The number of divorces grew dangerously day by day. If one observed those women who during the war lived in small hotels, helping each other with their babies only to get time for new acquaintances with men, or creating artificial tension and release by drinking and gambling, one has to ask what did the war do to these women? Were there always so many women psychopaths as it appears on the basis of these reports?

A child has to learn to give up immediate pleasure to achieve a later gratification permitted by the environment. This is the goal of education. The capacity for sustaining emotional equilibrium while waiting or working for later gratification depends

on a propensity of the personality which we call *ego strength*.⁴ The stronger the ego, the better it is capable of sustaining such an equilibrium and still have enough free energy to master the tasks which lie between present deprivation and future satisfaction. People can be characterized by the degree of their ego-strength. Those who can derive gratification from the fact that they are satisfying their ego-ideal are usually strong enough to wait for future gratification. Those whose ego is weak regress under the pressure of deprivation; they do not feel that they have an ego-ideal to satisfy; they act like little children who have not yet learned to wait. This is what happens to just these women of whom we are talking and whom we may call "war casualties." Under normal conditions they might not have become psychopathic personalities. Deriving satisfaction from the normal marital life they might have functioned in a socially acceptable fashion. They needed, however, encouragement and love as well as the continuous external demand which marriage represents. If all this is missing, as it may be if these women live alone, they do not usually have enough sustaining power in their personality to enable them to wait. They regress and give in to the temptation of immediate pleasure.

The gratification in promiscuity, however, cannot be enough since it is connected with so much condemnation. Fearing their own guilt feelings as well as the insecurity of their social position, the regression in these women functions like a vicious circle. Their conscience thrown overboard, their internal demands disappear and the psychic tension lessens. The interest in the everyday life diminishes and the women feel bored. The process is very similar to the emotional withdrawal of the soldier from his environment. She, as he, tries to get away from the boredom by seeking excitation and pleasure. Alcohol helps. "Alcohol dissolves the super-ego," a psychoanalyst once stated wittily. This means: if there was a conscience to interfere with the ego's immediate desire, alcohol makes for forgetting it. Alcohol permits irresponsibility.

These women do not do anything other than what men, prob-

⁴ Thomas M French: "Reality and the Unconscious," *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, VI-23, 1937.

ably their own husbands, are doing and doing without much reprimand. Why then are we so shocked? Society's evaluation measures women's behavior by different standards than it does that of men—and also by different expectations. These women seemingly do not care for society's opinion. Yet once they have begun on this road they are afraid of punishment, like children. They are afraid of their husbands, of their parents, of the community. Since they are not able to give up the gratification, they have to forget the guilt. Thus they turn away from their responsibility and begin to hate it, since one easily hates what one fears. Hence the hatred toward the children, the desire to get away from them, to get rid of them. With this, however, the woman puts herself outside of society; she becomes criminal. Whatever the motivations for this total regression are, she usually is so burdened by guilt that readjustment to normal marriage becomes hardly possible. Although these women often maintain that they love their husbands and believe that they could and would live together happily with him after he returns, one can hardly expect that the veteran should or would want to make a new start. Very often the returning husband turns against his wife in despair. Considering the insecurity, dissatisfaction and mobilized hostility of the returning soldier, it is easy to understand that he turns against his wife when he feels rejected, debased and cheated of all his expectations—of all his rights and hopes.



Endless seems the series of complications caused by women's reactions to war-time separation. However, they can be brought to a common denominator: they all represent variations of adjustments to sexual deprivation. Viewed from this aspect it is not difficult to create order in the mass of phenomena. We need only to investigate the ego-strength in its dealing with the problem of sexuality. We may begin with those whose ego-ideal demands a perfect mastery of any and every task. There were always women capable of raising a flock of children without a husband; capable of going out and earning a living for them, of taking care of them and of giving them a stability which, not

money but only a mother's love can procure. The active, productive motherliness of these women grants a gratification to them which makes sexual deprivation easy to bear. The war increased the number of those women for several reasons. There are women whose husbands never will come back, there are the ambitious women who did not want to miss the opportunity to earn money and proudly they did a double share in the war effort. They took care of their children and worked, too. Their ego-strength held out well in satisfying their ego-ideal; thus their struggle was satisfactory. Then there were those whose super-ego demands were the same but their ego was not strong enough to stand the strain, they suffered from deprivation and broke down with depression. Others avoided the conflict by increasing their dependence and demanding more protection from their husbands. Then we approach the end of the series and find those women who give in to temptation indiscriminately, and finally those who, to avoid responsibility, may destroy their families or themselves because they could not live without immediate gratification.

The post-war adjustment of all these women will have its specific difficulties. The marriage, even in the best conditions, will be only in some of its aspects, but not altogether, a continuation of the past, of the marriage before the war. The reunion represents a new beginning based on the reality of the sexual attraction between husband and wife at the returning. If this response is positive, the chances are good that they will overcome all the difficulties since love is the primary force which sustains the marriage.

Chapter 12

VETERANS AND WIVES

MARITAL READJUSTMENT AFTER WAR-TIME SEPARATION

The motivations of the emotional unbalance of the returning soldier are easy to understand. Although he clung to his civilian personality while he was in the Service, after he returned he realized that the Army life had become an integral part of his personality, he feels with regret that with the uniform which he took off, he also surrenders obvious signs of distinction and prestige. Unidentified in his civilian clothes, he comes back to a society which does not recognize him. He faces a situation similar to that which he had to master after entering the Services. At that time his wife helped him; if he did not have a wife, he fell in love quickly or fantasied love, since love is the best means to enhance one's ego. Returning to civilian life he needs again the reassurance which originates in the feeling that one is found worth loving. Does he find this when he comes back to his wife, to his children?

The acute change in the emotional balance, the psychodynamic effect of love, as we have learned, occurs usually in the first phase of a new love. The veteran who was married for a longer period does not come back to a new love; he comes back to his wife, to his children, to his responsibilities. He may realize with a shock, with self-reproach and self-pity, that he does not love his wife with the same happiness as he imagined he would. Many veterans blame the wives for this and become irritated; they may feel the urge to run away from their marriage as they once wanted to escape the Army. They will seek and find reasons for dissatisfaction. Others may develop a depression and thus act as if they would blame nobody but themselves.

An officer, married for several years, became depressed just

when his return to home on rotation neared. His love for his wife, with whom he lived in a satisfactory marriage, began after a depression which he had developed after being jilted by another girl. His depression did not return until the time of the anticipated return home. He was faithful to his wife and she was loyal to him. During his overseas duty this officer began to ponder whether he should remain in the Army or return to his civilian occupation after the war. Underneath this problem was the hidden question whether he should or should not return to his marriage. His strong sense of obligation never permitted him to deal with this question; he suppressed it; he avoided any thought which endangered his marriage. He was certain that the end-solution had to be a status quo of his marriage; the acute depression—an operational fatigue—developed into a chronic condition which was a reaction to his conflict. His super-ego required him to stay married and his unconscious drove him away from his marriage. We spoke about the war neuroses of the women but as this example shows, there may be a civilian neurosis behind the operational fatigue.

As this and several other examples show, it may happen that the man's capacity to love his wife is exhausted and that he cannot resume his marriage from where he left off. What does this mean for his wife? She suppressed her sexual tendencies in waiting for him; her hope and wish that her marriage should continue happily helped her in this suppression; it nourished in her the illusion that his homecoming would satisfy all her needs. Many women will respond with neurotic reactions if their hopes are disappointed. There is usually enough affection and expectation stored up in the wife to make for a happy reunion or to deal with the initial difficulties. Yet this "honeymoon" often does not last long. The woman has been suppressing her criticism of her husband, her demands upon him for too long a time. If he remains moody, she may suddenly feel that she gave too much for too long a time; she becomes resentful toward him who could take all the love and yet is still demanding more and more.

After the reunion both wife and husband undergo the process of adaptation, but now with a reversal of the emotions which

made separation such a painful but rich experience. At that time the woman's tenderness, her motherliness toward her husband increased; now her capacity for giving and sublimation declines. Like a mother who becomes impatient and hostile to a child who cannot be satisfied with what she is capable of giving, so the wife, disappointed by her husband's negativistic attitude, is unable to continue with the same patient love that she had before he left. The result often will be a regression in the woman's personality. She becomes envious of the husband, and of her children too. In general, we may say that in such situations the woman reverts from the motherly, waiting attitude to a childishly demanding one, thus forcing her husband to treat her with the attention and consideration which she misses more now that he is home than she did while he was forced to be away in war.

One of the most interesting properties of love is that it makes the person who loves just as happy or happier than the one who receives love. In contrast, hostility causes unhappiness not only to the person toward whom it is directed—he may protect himself against it—but even more to the person who feels hatred instead of love. Thus the hostile, competitive attitude of the wife toward her husband usually causes disagreeable tension in her.

A woman who was married for five years when her husband left for overseas duty felt very deeply in love with him during the time of their separation. She was pregnant with her second child when he left and she was contented with her children and with her duties. She waited with complete sexual concentration upon her husband. After three years he returned to be discharged on the point system and she was overwhelmingly happy. She was determined and trained to understand the difficulties of the veteran. She was patient with his moods as long as they were merely depressed and represented demands on her. However, soon he began to enjoy being the center of attention in their circle. His wife at first scolded herself for not being able to enjoy his success more, but she could not identify herself with his achievement. His success was outside of her; she felt soon that it was against her. She became very critical of him; she

felt that his personality had changed basically and she tried to change him by nagging. Since this had no effect, she felt helpless and began to think and believe that she had lost "too many chances" while he was away. This idea became quite a preoccupation and she was anxious to make him jealous, to humiliate him. She actually was not interested in any other man and she knew this, but she wanted revenge. She became tense, anxious and guilty. She felt unhappy because she could not love him as he appeared to be now; and she was dissatisfied with herself, because of her critical, unforgiving attitude toward him.

It is not always easy to interpret the invectives which husband and wife throw at each other. For if one feels disappointed in one's self, the criticism toward the partner may be a displacement of the self-criticism; or it may be that the tormenting self-reproach was originally a hostility felt toward the husband, but suppressed and turned against oneself. A critical attitude toward each other is one of the most characteristic manifestations of the pains of readjustment.

During the war-time separation husband and wife were deprived of sexual gratification as well as of each other's companionship, which in a good marriage means the immediate exchange of identifications in common experiences. To continue the relationship which has such an important function in the emotional balance of each, husband and wife lived their marriages in their fantasy. In fantasy one attributes one's own wishes, expectations and ideals to the other person; thus finally neither of them can really know how much is oneself and how much is the partner in the idealized figure built up during war-time separation. However, after the reunion, the real person begins to show himself. Under the pressure of external and even more under the pressure of internal reality (depression, incapacity to love, new interests developed during separation), one begins to see the other in the light of a reality which after such fantasy existence is so much sharper than the usual glow of everyday life. And husband as well as wife may be afraid of this. But is this the reality? In many cases it will be soon proved that this is not the reality just as the cherished fantasy was a false illusion.

This shock-like experience of mutual dissatisfaction and disillusionment easily becomes dangerous to those marriages in which there was no time to work out the marriage; where husband and wife were separated soon after the wedding and lived their marriage mainly in fantasy; they were hardly aware of the negative aspects of the loved person's character; they never permitted themselves to know or to admit what they might not like or to consider how they would act toward the loved person should they dislike something in each other. Love—no matter how passionate it may be—does not exclude hatred; those who love each other can hurt each other the most and, therefore, they may hate each other. Those who had been married for some time experienced this mutual ambivalence; they learned to develop defenses against it; they also learned that even the hatred and incompatibility may originate in passion and that for the sake of the gratifying aspects of their union, they can forget, and forgive or overcome in themselves what hurts. If such people experience the disappointing characteristics of each other after war-time separation, they may still suffer from it but they will not be so afraid of it. They know how to deal with it.

But those who experience for the first time marriage in all its reality, living together in everyday life—without the threat and glamour of separation—may be seriously disturbed when they realize the depth of their antagonism. This they may interpret as a sign of their marriage being a serious mistake; worried for their future and ashamed of the mistake, they may want to separate again before they really have given as much opportunity for their marriage to succeed as they would have given to a peace-time marriage. For an added factor which contributes to the instability of the war-time marriage is that the persons involved have not learned to feel secure about it. While together and still bride and bridegroom, they may have wanted the marriage passionately. During the war-time separation, they may begin to examine it and recognize the thin foundation of their relationship. Thus they become very anxious to prove to themselves (and to others) that they were correct in their choice and thus they may be very sensitive to anything and everything which seems to discredit their judgment.

The families of both husband and wife are at hand to help "undo the mistake" as quickly as the machinery of the law permits. They may encourage the newly reunited couple to remain together but with the proviso "as long as possible," thus voicing or creating doubts as to the permanence of their affection for each other. For it seems that many fathers and mothers, and others as well, abuse and exploit as well as use what they have learned about the veteran's psychology in their attempts to influence the marital relationship of the young people. The parents of the young wife especially seem to be worried and express concern that she made a wrong choice. The husband, who may now be a "neuropsychiatric discharge," a "mental case," will ruin her life—so they fear; and they are anxious to induce her to divorce him before she has children—before it is too late. In many cases the mothers of the young wife never really accepted the marriage, they regarded it from the beginning as a mistake, "a lesser evil," an expediency. In other instances probably the mother's own ambitions had not been realized in her daughter's marriage and she sees in divorce an opportunity for her to become free to achieve a "great," socially important marriage and thus to fulfil the mother's fantasy. Our experience has been that meddling in the marriage in the phase in which both husband and wife are extremely sensitive about the wisdom and permanence of their choice, is even more harmful than it is in other circumstances. It decreases the wife's confidence in herself and in her husband. The husband in turn feels unaccepted and this increases his insecurity, which may make it impossible for him to adjust to marriage and to civilian life. Just as often, obviously, the parents of the young husband may want to undo his marriage; they do not accept the daughter-in-law after the war, even though they did not oppose the marriage during war-time. Then they acquiesced to it because they were under the influence of the fear that this might be their son's "last wish"; if he comes back, they also would like him to have "another chance" to seek a wife "under normal circumstances."

If the son comes back changed, severely wounded physically or emotionally, the attitude of the veteran's parents is different, and in contrast to that of the wife's parents. Under such cir-

cumstances they accept gratefully the wife who is willing to give love and emotional security to their son. But it must be noted: this attitude is not motivated solely by unconscious hostility toward the wife; it does not mean "you see now what you have"; it plays, rather, an important role in the emotional readjustment of the parents themselves toward their wounded, changed son. In fact, this is often the very first situation in which a mother may realize that she is unable to give the son any happiness; she may feel empty and desperate about her own incapacitation, but her identification with her son is so deep that she feels helpless toward him. It is fortunate then if the veteran's parents, especially his mother, realizing this, are able to withdraw and leave the place for the veteran's wife, who can help him with her love. Through this the mother of the veteran may learn to love the daughter-in-law and finally by identification with her she will accept her changed son and heal her own wounds. In many instances, the young wife is afraid of the parents-in-law and of the discord with them. She may feel greatly relieved and helped by their acceptance. It may satisfy her ego and give her more strength and courage to carry on a marriage which has become a hard task for her. However, many young marriages are denied such cooperative effort. This is to be regretted, for even if the husband is not severely wounded, the young marriage is burdened with the economic insecurity of the post-war period.



In interpreting the emotional difficulties of the wives in adjusting to the civilian status of their returning husbands, let us recall what love means to a woman. Sexual attraction and the gratification of sexual desire are only a part of her love. Woman's love grows out from a deep-going, biological insecurity, from the feeling that she will be completed through the man who loves her. And she feels deeply in need of this, since social insecurity affects the emotional life of women more profoundly than it influences men. Women, even in our society of equal opportunity to the sexes, measure themselves, because they feel that they are so measured, by the social value of the man

who chooses to marry them. This, more than any other reason, is responsible for young girls "chasing after the most popular boy," and for the woman's desire to marry a successful man. If the community cannot appreciate the man who chose her, she herself loses value and so does her feeling for the man; she begins to doubt her love. This painful lack of confidence in one's self and in one's capacity to love is the motivating factor behind the wife's ambition for her husband's achievement—and this is what becomes problematic when he turns from soldier to civilian.

Although the rank of the husband played an important role for the wives, still many socially ambitious girls married a "Private," postponing all ambitions for the husband's effectiveness until after the war. Even if she was competing with other wives, the fact that he was a soldier and in war gave him prestige or, in any case, put him in an exceptional category which could not be evaluated and measured simply by the status of civilian achievements. Besides that there was always the chance that he might become exceptional, decorated and by this he could be presented to the community as a superior individual—a hero—and in this way he may give special prestige to his wife. After he becomes a civilian again, the Army is not there to cover up his wife's needs to be elevated in her own and in her friends' esteem by her husband's position; to establish his civilian status becomes extremely urgent for her. In this respect, Sergeant Mauldin expressed the feelings of millions of women in a cartoon: Bill was in civilian clothes carrying his child on his arm, ready to go for a walk with his wife. The caption reads: "I thought you would wear your uniform so that I could be proud of you."

Yes, even if he was not an officer, there were the ribbons and the stripes showing how long he was overseas—how much she suffered waiting for him; how many battles he saw—how much she worried for him; and this accounts to any stranger for the fact that they are poor, that they do not have a car, that they do not live in a big apartment. But when he is a civilian, all this is not recognizable. This is important to him too. He may feel like a nobody without the history of the last years on his chest and on his sleeves. But he may be willing to give himself

a vacation and take time to prove himself again. His wife, however, is more anxious; and the financial necessities are not the only motivating factors in this impatience. Women who are financially independent in their own name or that of the husband, women who are successful in their own careers, are just as worried about the husband's civilian career as those who really need the weekly wage to carry on. We may even say that the former are more anxious and worried than the latter since actually it is not their economic but their emotional security which is at stake. A "job" he will have, if any job may suffice. Beyond the economic necessity is the woman's great desire that her marriage in reality fulfil not only the fantasy of many years of separation, but all her growing-girl fantasies as well, she wants to protect herself against disillusionment because she fears that she will not be able to love him after disappointment. This does not mean that she is petty or greedy, that only external values have importance for her. If she really loved him, she projected her own personal sense of values onto him; if her expectations are frustrated, not only does he lose in her appreciation of him but also she loses in her own self-esteem. Thus she may become depressed and unable to love him. This is the reason why she begins to watch carefully whether her husband lives up to the images of her fantasy; and if she feels insecure about this, she may seek solution in various ways. If she is a resourceful person she may be helpful in stirring the husband's ambitions in the right way and in the right direction. If she is a passive and dependent person, she may expect everything to come from him and will not notice her own lack of cooperation since she already blames him for her own deficiencies. Neurotic women, unable to adjust to frustration, unconsciously punish their husbands in seeking revenge for their disappointment. Their fantasy destroyed, they cannot help but damage their marriage by being extremely critical of their husband and this may become humiliating and discouraging to him.

The fear of disillusionment disturbs many women even before their husbands return. It came like a wave immediately after Japan's capitulation. The women, expecting economic insecurity, were suddenly afraid that their marriages would suffer

if the husbands could not have a chance to become immediately successful in civilian life. Interestingly, the women most deeply concerned were again not those really dependent on their husbands' income, but rather those who, during the time of separation, grew in their earning capacity as well as in emotional independence. They asked themselves whether their husbands would be able to accept their independence, but they were just as concerned about their own willingness to agree to his demands and refrain from work. They had learned how to earn a living, how to take strenuous and important responsibilities. They realize that during the years of separation, while they became successful, their work or profession became an important part of their lives. They are very sincere in asking themselves the question whether they will be able to be satisfied without an independent career. A marriage may suffer from the frustrations of a wife who is not allowed to continue her expansive activity in work. Will the husband's prestige, success and earning power foot the bill, figuratively as well as literally? These are problems which increase the wife's insecurity, her impatience, and also her criticisms of her husband; but her husband, too, is aware of all this. He knows that instead of the lover and provider that he wanted to be, he has become a competitor of his wife's and he will be anxiously desirous to prove his superiority.

While the husband was in the Army he might have identified himself with his wife's achievements; he might even have encouraged and helped her in them; he was usually even proud of them. This participation, however, works better from a distance than in everyday life. If she really succeeded, and it may happen that, during the four or five years while he was away, she succeeded even in what was his ambition, it is only natural that the husband becomes envious and defensive. An enlisted man who had a wife and two children used to be quite proud of his wife who, after he left for the Army, with the help of her sister, took care not only of the house and children but also of her husband's business, which flourished during the boom. The soldier enjoyed the prospect of coming home to such prosperous conditions. His post-war plans seemed to be ready-made. He became sick and was discharged on account of a skin condition. In his

depressive reaction to his return he felt that "they don't really need me here." His wife reassured him as well as she was able to, but words and even love helped little. He had the feeling that he received much more from his family than he was able to give to them. "They got along fine without me," he repeated resentfully. He did not feel love for them, he could not feel appreciation for what his wife had done and was doing; he was fighting against his own dependence, and he became irritated, uncommunicative and depressed.

There are, of course, men who, confident in their own strength, can accept their wife's success graciously; others again accept it too readily, and on account of their increased dependence rely too much and too long on her help and achievement. Yet a woman can hardly adjust to a weak and actually dependent husband without losing much of her femininity. She may accept the role if necessity so dictates, but she will be in conflict with her womanly desire which seeks to surrender to a superior man.

The basic differences between the personalities of husband and wife are often covered up and will be expressed only in petty incompatibilities; thus they become critical and unsympathetic over the superficial signs of their estrangement. For many years the wife has lived without her husband. This affected her habits and routine. She did not need to please and appease his moods; she has become unaccustomed to accounting for her time, for her money or for her housekeeping. This is true not only for the women who earned their money independently but also for those who lived on their allotment. In many marriages the struggle of the readjustment will be expressed in the quarrels about who holds the purse strings. For many husbands the control of the budget represents the acknowledgment that he is the head of the family and in reverse for many women this is the manifestation of independence, and therefore they may struggle for this right with bitterness.

The problem of who is to hold the purse strings has not only an emotional significance, but also many practical and real importances. The men are not aware that while they were in the Army they had forgotten the meaning of budgeting. Money

has little meaning or a different one for soldiers than for civilians, they may easily gamble it away today or spend it on luxuries, since their everyday necessities are taken care of, and for them the tomorrow counts but little. In civilian life, the veteran has to learn quickly what his wife found out only slowly, how to adjust the budget to the complex needs of civilian living, which became even more involved through rationing and through changing prices. However confusing this may all be to a returning soldier, nevertheless he still feels robbed of his rights and of his supremacy in the family if his wife takes over this function.

But the fight over such issues is only a superficial manifestation of the problem that husbands pose to themselves. "Am I the man whom she recognizes as the strong one, whom she therefore loves?" The wife struggles in the same way: "Is he the one who is my master, to whom I can surrender in love?" For basically she remains a woman; she wants and needs her husband not only as an equal but also as the stronger partner. If she is mature, she will also realize that in her newly acquired independence she demands more from her husband than she did when she left to him the role of provider, leader, and protector, unchallenged. Her worries are thus related not only to her husband's adjustment but also to her own. Will she be able to soften the expression of her independence until her husband regains his security, or will she become guilty of abusing her position, her power at present, and thereby ruin the future? This is the underlying problem giving impetus to the many questions which these women ask us now. They mistrust themselves, their own maturity; they are unsure of their capacity to love and give, and at the same time they are afraid that their husbands will not accept them with their present personality. Aware of their own need to have a strong husband, they are jealously conscious of the possibility that their husband may fall in love with somebody who is younger and who admires him without doubt. Thus sexual jealousy may add to the wife's desire to control her husband even while she desires nothing more than his sexual and emotional domination. And thus the gap may grow wider.

It is obvious that any previous conflict inherent in the rela-

tionship may be exacerbated by this change in the status of husband and wife. And whatever direction it takes, it will also affect the children. While ideologically in our culture of equal rights and opportunities, the goal should be a relationship between equally independent marital partners, actually this ideal can be reached only in the continuous exchange within the marriage. Long separation interrupts the parallel and complementing development of the marital partners and brings about the danger of competition and resentment where otherwise mutual identification would make the development fruitful.



A man, too, may meet with disillusionment in his wife because her development did not keep pace with his. Many a young man married before he entered the Services, or under the pressure of the war-time emotional insecurity, a girl whose personality does not now suit his demands and ambitions after his experiences in the Army. His maturation may be in the intellectual, social and emotional fields; when he returns he may realize that his wife is not equipped to share his development in a companionable marriage. Yet the problems for their adjustment may be relatively simple, since it depends mainly on sexual attraction. If real affection and sexual passion keep them together, her admiration for him may facilitate his emotional and financial rehabilitation. If the discrepancy between the personalities is such that the husband cannot find enough gratification in the companionship, he probably will soon find ways and means to free himself.

More complex is the readjustment in those marriages in which the wife is not only emotionally dependent on her husband but increases her demands on him just because of the war-time separation. While she was unable to grow in independence during the separation, after he returns, she expects her husband to satisfy all her aspirations which paradoxically grew during the war. As long as the husband was away in the Army, the wife could blame the government for her frustration—and she did: she transferred her dependence onto impersonal, super-personal organizations from whom she was continuously de-

manding recompensation. The gratification which one is able to get through the help of social agencies is limited enough and can hardly be called "indulgence." Emotionally, however, a peculiar situation occurs.

Mrs. W., for example, was pregnant with her second child when she asked the social agency for assistance. Her husband had left shortly before and was serving with the Marines. Before his induction he had been earning good wages; but they did not plan their expenditures—they had bought some new furniture recently and moved into a nicer apartment in preparation for the new baby. Mrs. W. wanted to retain this home since "he should come back to it," and she did not want to live with her in-laws. She wrote to him regularly, telling him how hard it was for her to be alone, to take care of the child (4 years old) while she was pregnant. She was very explicit in her demands. "Things get too much for me and then I do not care what I say," she said by way of apology when she explained to the social worker that she "should not be placed in the position of watching pennies." She asked for everything new for the baby—layette, crib, and baby-carriage, and was childishly happy when she received them. After the baby was born she became more and more anxious to request a dependency discharge for her husband; she hesitated, however, because she was afraid he would resent it. His letters from San Diego, where he was in training, sounded very cheerful; he was not worried about going overseas either. Thus she felt that he was on vacation from family responsibilities and had left her alone with the housework, children, to get along on the allotment. Instead of worrying about her husband she was full of self-pity and in this mood she needed more and more emotional care and financial assistance from the agency. Finally she developed arthritis in one shoulder; thus she was in a situation where she could not do her work; this gave her the external justification to request a dependency discharge for her husband. She assumed that he could not resent this when he was made to realize how miserable she felt; she believed that under such conditions he would gladly share the responsibilities with her. She did not stop to think that after the discharge they would have no allotment coming in

regularly, that he would have to go to work to earn the money and that in addition to this full-time job, he would be expected by her to help in taking care of the children, in managing the household, and also to give her the attention which should help her. This is a double job which many Marines will find harder to take than Bougainville.

Many women with an emotional make-up similar to that of Mrs. W. do not realize that during the years of separation they lived in an unreal world in which they assumed that the husband had done everything before and would do everything again. This, however, was an illusion. After their husbands left, these women turned for help to their families, friends, and to social agencies. Whatever their concrete needs were, unconsciously they asked for recompensation for the sacrifice which they were making, so they felt, in living without him. Families, friends and agencies were willing and ready to give them emotional support, which enabled these women to exaggerate their fantasies about the husband, and to imagine that he always did and will again satisfy all their needs. They do not realize that they demand more from the veteran husband than they did from the pre-war husband. Thus disappointment has to come. However, the acceptance of disappointment in this situation would mean the admission that one fantasied, that one expected too much. Such insight would indicate her own responsibility for her increased dependence. Thus it is usually denied. Instead of admitting their own mistakes, these women rather deny the shortcomings of the husband too; he has to be good to justify their fantasies. If he is unable or unwilling to gratify their demands, these women project the total blame on the war. And somebody shall help to undo the harm!

There are many situations which bring us to the conclusion that the "psychology of the eternal veteran" originates more in the veteran's family, in his dependent wife and dependent, demanding mother than in the veteran himself. The veteran, if he is not severely pathological, wants to reestablish himself in civilian life. During his Army life he learned what he could expect from the government and he knew that there was little sense in demanding more and in demanding something different. And

he acts accordingly as long as he acts upon his own insight. His dependent wife, however, puts him under tremendous pressure. she demands that he be the provider, the good father to her and to the children, as well as the husband and lover. If he fails to satisfy her, she apologizes for him with the idea that this has happened because he was away and he was in the Army; and for this "you have to be compensated." The easiest solution for the veteran is to finally accept this concept and make it his own and blame the Army and ask for more and more assistance.

Mrs. M. had a rheumatic fever when her husband's induction came up. He asked for deferment and this was granted. Half a year later his wife was up and around; she did have an organic heart condition, but in an incipient and well-compensated state. Her life was not endangered; she was even able to take a job as a clerk. Her husband's deferment was withdrawn and he was inducted. Soon after that she became sick; she had tonsillitis and her fear of repetition of the rheumatic fever was very great. She complained of the care she got, nothing could satisfy her since her idea was that only her husband could give her the right care. After the tonsillitis she developed heart symptoms which were neurotic in nature; she was afraid of dying. Her condition was bad enough to warrant a furlough for the husband. His presence had an amazingly good effect on her. She was happy and almost symptom-free; her husband overstayed his leave and frankly told the social worker that although he did not mind the Army life, he would rather be home with his wife. Like delinquent children, they had the feeling that they were justified in doing what they did in order to satisfy their mutual needs. After the husband was persuaded to return, Mrs. M. became sullen, withdrawn, did not work, and she lived in expectation of his home-coming. She requested a dependency discharge on the grounds of her illness; it was not granted. After he was sent overseas she became sick again. Her husband became more and more worried. Underneath the worry for his wife there was also the fear of the future, the fear of combat. It was just as necessary in his emotional life as it was for her: to feel that being together they would protect each other from death. His depression and anxiety increased; finally he was discharged.

After he came home, his depression did not lift as easily as did hers. He now felt guilty and dependent; she, initially happy about his return, was soon disappointed, since the same happy state of the previous furlough was not repeated. Unable to take any responsibility either for what happened to him or for their common future, she blamed the war and the Service for his depression, for his lack of interest in work and even for his reluctance in helping her. It was advised that both have psychiatric treatment. In this he was more accessible than she; he had some insight based on the guilt over deserting his comrades. She, however, was reluctant: she was as afraid now that the treatment would change their relationship as she was once afraid to lose him to the Army. The result was a compromise: he became able to take a job and to work; she, however, did not lessen her peculiar and stubborn emotional dependence. Whatever her complaints, she did not blame her husband. The responsibility for everything was put on the government, on the war. Thus at first she, and through her her husband, developed a dependent veteran psychology.

Such a marriage may be called "too well-adjusted." The identification between the marital partners reaches into almost every detail of their lives, consequently increasing their dependence on each other and also their fear of any outside influence. Finally the neurosis which impedes external success, impoverishes even those aspects of their life together—mainly their sexuality—which originally made them happy.

The example of Mr. and Mrs. M. demonstrates the effect of extreme dependence in marriage and the pathology of its post-war adjustment. The war, as the tremendous scapegoat, takes the responsibility for faults of the infantile, undeveloped and neurotic personality. Similar interpersonal relationships might develop at any time in such passive, dependent individuals. Yet the war has had a specific effect upon their communal neurosis. The war mobilized more affects than these undeveloped persons could manage; it mobilized their fears of danger and also their expectations of a protection which they could not have demanded were it not that they also were participants in the great effort of the nation.

The same psychodynamic factors may be at work in many marriages, even if they do not always lead to so eminently neurotic behavior. The psychological process may be thus summarized: the women during the long waiting idealized their husbands and their expectations now represent an increased demand on him. Were it not for the war, they would never have pictured him to be so powerful and so able to sense and to respond to all their desires. They would never have fantasied him and therefore would never have demanded him to be so good, so efficient and so considerate. The Army's prestige, its heroic exploits, and its marvelous results necessarily influenced everybody who was closely identified with anyone in the Army. Even a very realistic person could not help but project the glory and prestige upon the one or upon those few soldiers with whom she was personally connected. Thus the wife could not avoid the idealization which may be so quickly destroyed by reality. Those women whom we described as independent will also respond to such disappointment. However, they will try to do something about it, either by their own activity or by trying to influence their husband's activity. In contrast, the dependent women persist in their demands but they do not help to achieve them.

For all women, for the independent as well as for the dependent, "returning to normalcy" means to have all the things which the women in their own particular social sphere used to have and which they postponed "for the duration." They looked forward to having their own home, their own furniture, to having "their friends in," to having all that for them means "being settled." All women anticipated with great pleasure this period of building up their marriage, their home and their family. And many feared openly or secretly the circumstances which might interfere with the actualization of their hopes. If the husband's working capacity diminished during the war, his wife has justification in blaming the war. Many women adjust to this situation emotionally and work hard to secure their marriage, even if the husband can contribute to it only his veteran's compensation. Other women will be apt to exaggerate the justification for their complaints and overemphasize the government's re-

sponsibility in all their disappointments. And in all this, it is not only the material aspects of the marriage which are at stake. Any ambition which is thwarted may mobilize the emotional insistence upon compensation. For example, if the ambition of both husband and wife included a college education or training in a profession, both may be disappointed if he is unable to carry it through. Then it often happens that the wife, even if she recognizes her husband's academic inefficiency, continues to blame the war for it and she does so, as long as she wants to identify herself with him. Thus there is and will be a wave of projection of responsibility upon the war and upon those who can be held liable for it. The important fact here is that beyond the modicum of reality justification, women have an emotional need to use this mechanism in order to expiate their husbands. If they do not hold him accountable for his insufficiencies, they may have the illusion of satisfaction even if other women's husbands are more successful.



The Army is emotionally a more neutral and less demanding environment than is the family. When the civilian left his family to become a soldier, he carried with him in his personality the results and effects of all the interpersonal relationships within his family. The impersonal relations in the Army represent a threat to some soldiers and a relief for others. Yet, to a great degree his pre-war personality determined his adaptation to Army life unless he was exposed to such combat experiences which, representing a specific factor, might exhaust the resources of any well-balanced person. When the soldier returns, he becomes the center of an emotionally charged family. He is not a neutral member of a group as he was in the Army. The emotions are directed toward him; he has to respond to them, he has to gratify them or he has to take the consequences of failing them. Thus, as we tried to show in our discussion, his post-war adjustment depends only partially on himself; it is, in final analysis, the result of the interpersonal relations within his family. Just as his childhood was moulded by the moods and aspirations, love and rejection of his parents, so again he can be

affected by these emotions of his parents and of his wife when he returns after a long separation. Many chronic or acute neurotic manifestations of the veterans will have only an indirect relation to the war: they will actually be the result of the effects of war-time separation upon the other members of his family, especially upon his wife.

The older generation he may outgrow; with his siblings—within the family or in the community—he may fight; but with his wife he has to work for a common future. In this they are equal, in this they need each other in full measure.

Chapter 13

MOURNING FOR THE SOLDIER

The emotional response to the loss of a beloved person by death is deeply ingrained in human nature. Sadness and grief, weeping and lamentation are the natural expressions of mourning. They serve to relieve the mental pain which, when analyzed, is proved to consist of fear and guilt, the two main emotions causing human suffering.

The death of a beloved person, the final, irrevocable interruption of a human relationship, awakens the same fear which a child experiences when left alone by the mother; the satisfaction of the dependent needs is cut short; hopes, expectations invested in the beloved have to be abandoned and they cannot be transferred to another person as yet. Thus, if mourning is profound the individual appears to have lost interest in the outside world, in so far as it does not recall to him memories of the dead. Only the past, as it is related to the lost love-object, has meaning and interest. This is what Freud called "the withdrawal of libido (psychic energy) from its attachment,"¹ and this is what the individual experiences fearfully and sadly at being left alone to his unhappy self. In this helpless mood the mourning individual is afraid of punishment, of the punishment of the dead. Thus, he will investigate the past relationship in the new light of the irreplaceable loss. The conscience, sensitized and infuriated by the sense of loss, investigates whether and in what respects one became guilty toward the love-object. Painful self-reproach is a normal factor in grief. It causes the sense of worthlessness which makes the mourning person similar to the individual who suffers from melancholia. Yet *mourning*, as Freud puts it, *is a necessary work*. It proceeds from the first reaction to death in

¹ Sigmund Freud "Mourning and Melancholia," *Collected Papers*, IV:152 Hogarth Press, London, 1925.

order to free the individual from pain and to enable him to turn toward the world again with interest. In the first period of this process, indeed, the dead dominates the living. While the individual has to get used to the fact that the beloved does not exist in reality any more, he (the dead) becomes the only or the main existing psychic reality. All psychic interests are turned to him. The past is repeated; the memories and hopes which were invested in the relationship are reexamined by a self-castigating conscience. Through this process finally the original affects of fear and guilt are used up bit by bit, and the original relationship—love and hatred (since almost all human relationships have this bipolarity)—undergoes a change. In the same way as once the conscience developed after renunciation of love, so does the working through in the mourning finally effect a change in the psychological place of the beloved person. He was, as long as he lived, a person outside of one's self, promising gratifications; during the mourning, he was loved but he was threatening and punishing within one's self; after the mourning, he is a part of one's self; he became a measure for good and bad, as a part of one's conscience. Through this process the individual having become more similar to the love-object than he was before feels reassured and free to turn his interest toward life again. This is the *work* performed by mourning in its broad psychodynamic generalization.

The content of the mourning necessarily shows variations depending upon the original nature of the relationship. The grief of husband and wife for each other is obviously different from a mother's or father's mourning for a son and this is different in some ways from the mourning for a daughter. The severity of the mourning process and its outcome depend upon the original ambivalence of the relationship. This determines the amount of guilt mobilized by the mourning. If this is excessive, the mourning may develop into depression or melancholia.

In the following pages we will describe some of the qualifications of the process occurring in the mourning for a soldier killed in war.



Mourning begins with the fear of losing the gratifications of the emotional needs and with the guilt that one's self is responsible for the loss. We have described similar feelings in women—wives and mothers alike—as reactions to the trauma of separation. We even gave examples of women responding to the departure of the beloved person as if he would have been lost irrevocably. Even if the response to separation is not exaggerated, there is a period of emotional concentration upon the person who left for war. This revives the memories of the past, increases the dependence and causes avoidance of those situations which would provoke guilt since the conscience is sensitized by fear. While the internal emotional constellation is similar to that in mourning, it is not a complete mourning but a moderated one; the verdict of reality testing is that he is alive. The relationship, although interrupted in the reality, is preserved by the forces of fantasy. This moderated mourning, the reaction to the separation, is a curative process in more than one way. While his family learned to live without the soldier they actually overcame the fear of his death. He survived the mourning; thus one believes that he will not die. If the tragic news of his death comes, it leaves the individuals who love him stunned. Death is unexpected and inexplicable. If he died far away from home in any one of the thousands of brutal ways of war, those who love him cannot accept the fact that this could have happened to him since they did not see it. Thus death remains unreal.

Even if one succeeded in collecting information about the circumstances of his death, those who were not in war can only partially realize what happened. Mourning, initiated in this way, is different in its manifestations, particularly in the tempo of its working process, from the acute, concentrated mourning. And the latter is observed if a person has lost through death someone who was not only the source of gratification and the bearer of future hopes, but also a part of one's everyday life. Such an event demands an immediate reorientation of the total emotional household. The approach to the slightest task of everyday life runs into the necessity of realizing that the beloved person is not present and never will be. Thus what was described as the with-

drawal of libido is enforced by external circumstances. When he was here yesterday every chair cries out to tell that he will not be sitting in it again. The mourning is different if the relationship was already loosened, if the emotional independence was already established by adaptation to separation. Then the acute phase of the mourning is not so absorbing, not so concentrated, although it may be just as profound. The death of the beloved does not cry out from every spot in the home, the living were already used to the fact that he was not around. While one tries to accept the reality of his death, one has to prove it to one's self by telling every bit of household furniture that he never will come back. But death does not activate as acute a sense of guilt as when it occurs at home and when, during the acute phase of mourning, one imagines that in some way one's self was responsible. War takes over and relieves the individual's responsibility. Since the ambivalence was partially overcome already in the reaction to separation, the process of mourning becomes relatively free from guilt; thus such mourning is less castigating, less self-torturing and altogether a slower process. The memories of the past become the most important emotionally charged elements of the sorrow. Through this, the process of identification is renewed and finally achieved more profoundly than before. However, this intrapsychic process does not result in too severe a conscience; it does not become too punitive toward the ego.

This is true for young wives especially. They lived a relatively short time with their husband; their identification with him does not go back too far. Relieved from responsibility and guilt for his death and also emotionally gratified by the sympathy which they receive, the process of mourning is relatively short; soon the ego becomes free to turn to new love objects again. We may be surprised how soon the wife may remarry and then we always hear that "this is what he would have wanted me to do." This seems to be in agreement with our assumption that the super-ego, renewed by the incorporation of the beloved person who died in war, becomes rather mild. It has happened, and not infrequently, that young widows, after they remarried, found that their first husband was still living. There is a law in preparation

to annul the second marriage in such cases. This law assumes that the first marriage has the rights. Although the newspapers bring happy accounts of such reunions, there is room for doubt as to the future of such marriages. While the ambivalence of the wife toward the husband disappeared in the mourning and the husband returning from death is happy to live and love, we can assume that the hostility will reappear with vehemence once the joy of the reunion has been spent. The husband will resent that his wife accepted his death so easily as a permission to marry someone else; and for the wife, who already mourned him as dead, will he be alive or will he be a spectre of the past mobilizing her guilt and fear? The germ of maladjustment certainly can spread in such a relationship.



The mother's and father's reaction to the death of a son is necessarily that of irreplaceable loss. As we described, the parents' relationship to the growing child normally undergoes a process of identification. The son represents a part of the self for the mother as well as for the father even though to each in a different way. When, during the process of mourning, this identification is reinstated in a more complete form, the resulting emotional state is very complex. Almost conscious is the parents' feeling that a part of the self died and that future hopes are senseless. At the same time the re-enhanced identification with the son becomes manifest in behavior, in thinking and in attitudes. The parents have the innate disposition to live what they thought their son would become and they may realize this partially but only in a rigid, old-mannish or old-womanly way. Very often the mourning exhausts the adaptability of the elderly persons and they become unpliable; their emotional life may narrow down to a chronic mourning for the son, who becomes more and more idealized. In this idealization of the son we sometimes may recognize a sort of narcissistic aggrandisement of their own personality. The son who died an heroic death becomes the symbol of all aspirations, and also of all talents; thus the belief grows strong that his achievements and perfection could only have been limited by death. Thus fathers and moth-

ers (and also wives, especially if the marriage was of long duration) may receive gratification by establishing such idealized identification. Although their personality becomes rigid they feel elevated in their self-esteem by the identification with the dead love-object.

Such narcissistic identification with the heroic, idealized love-object may strongly influence the development of adolescent brothers and sisters. They, even more than the older members of the family, were inclined to see in the soldier-brother a hero, an ideal and had tried to imitate him already when he left for war. If he was killed in action, their fantasy will adorn his supreme sacrifice with all heroic deeds. For boys he becomes the ideal to live up to, to avenge. During the war, in many instances, we observed that adolescents immediately attempted to enlist after a brother was killed in action. The conscious desire was to fill his boots and to avenge his death. Unconscious motivations such as the desire to attract the parents' attention (who were wrapped up in mourning for the dead brother) and others might have added to this haste. Usually the grief was short in such cases, since an active identification took place and stimulated the development of the young men. Thus, except in already pathological individuals, such a mourning did not create neurotic conflicts. It is different if the young man who survived his brother was already in the Army and experienced the dangers of war. The identification with the dead might have increased his fighting spirit in the desire to outdo him and to avenge him. Yet, in many instances the sense of gratification over one's survival activated a feeling of guilt. The conflict which developed could only rarely be overcome by heroic deeds; rather, the increased guilt activated the fear that "this can happen to me too" and then the mourning for the brother changed to manifestations of acute or chronic war neuroses.

Adolescent girls' mourning for the heroic death of the brother results also in identification, the result of which necessarily cannot be direct or complete. It is, however, often profound enough to change the personality of the girl as well as to influence her choice of love-object decisively. Regarding the effects of such identification upon the development of girls, we

had the opportunity to observe them in women who suffered the loss of a brother or cousin in the first World War. If the girl was in doubt about her value as a woman and desirous of being a man, the tendency to identify with the brother received a profound impetus through the mourning. Thus the dead brother was reinstated as an ego-ideal. This is what Freud meant by "narcissistic identification with the love object."² After such a change in the structure of the personality, the girl felt distinguished from others, felt like a better person and often kept herself isolated. If her femininity was already developed enough, the results affected the choice of love-object only. She could be satisfied only with a man in whom she could see the image and fulfilment of her brother's ideal or what she projected onto the brother, expecting him to have realized it. Very often the identification with the brother went so far that such girls refused their femininity; they assigned themselves to the role of completing his "life task," of fulfilling his destiny, which was interrupted by death. Many of the Nazi women in Germany achieved their unbending character and rigid aggressivity through such emotional development. In one case this rationalization was based on the premise that the heroic brother's will acted through her to fulfil the task he was prevented from achieving, only by death. This girl, young and pretty, felt and talked like a Joan of Arc; she felt frustrated since her ecstatic enthusiasm for her country was not needed in the same way as Joan of Arc was needed. Her brother, the center and determining part of her ego-ideal, was substituted at first with the idea of Germany, the *State*, and this, usually too abstract an idea for a woman, was replaced by Hitler; it was animated by the Fuhrer, who became for her the incarnation of her brother and his will. Women, even if their narcissistic masculine identification does not take such strong expression as it did in this case, may withdraw from the feminine role and may transform it from an emotional and instinctual need to a part of an all-pervading will.

We assume that in this country the masculine identification with the heroic brother will not take this compulsive and para-

² Sigmund Freud: "On Narcissism: An Introduction," *Collected Papers*, IV:30, Hogarth Press, London, 1925.

noid expression. Yet the mourning for the brother killed in war may influence the girl's development through an identification which enhances her masculine tendencies.



Mourning, effecting, as it does, a profound identification with the love-object, changes the personality. Young people, brothers and sisters, may act out the identification for the best or for the worst. Young wives usually are affected by it in the choice of their second husband. Mothers and fathers will live in their own way the heritage of their sons. Yet character-formation is not the only result of mourning, especially of the grief created by the death of the soldier.

We described that mourning under such conditions may differ from the usual mourning because the affects, the sorrow and guilt, the pain and anguish are not as acutely and frankly expressed as they are if the beloved person lived and died at home. Since the intrapsychic process develops without frank expression of affects, the suppressed and repressed affects may find hidden discharge in affecting the vegetative nervous system. The most common reaction is noticed in the gastrointestinal system. Lack of appetite, nausea and vomiting often accompany the first phase of mourning. Since increased dependent needs and fear of lonesomeness as well as guilt are the typical emotions of mourning, any one of these or all may find a psychosomatic expression in ways peculiar to the individual. Some will respond to the anxiety with heart symptoms; others with colitis. Some will respond to the increased guilt feelings with depression; in older people it may increase the blood pressure, or arteriosclerosis may follow the mourning. Sometimes the psychosomatic effects become severe; other times they pass slowly as the process of mourning succeeds in relieving the individual from his emotional attachment to the deceased.

The psychodynamic task of mourning is an adaptation which has to be worked out within the individual. Life may appear emptier than before and one's self changed after the process is finished. Yet, one may speak of finished mourning and after

this is completed, the relationship between the living and the dead belongs to the past and survives only in the memories of the living. Death as it eliminates the love and gratification also removes the tensions and frustrations which come with life.

Chapter 14

THE DISABLED VETERAN

In all our discussions of the problems concerning the veteran and his family, we did not take into consideration any actual and deep-going—probably irreversible—change in the veteran's personality. Yet the changes wrought in him by wounds, by disabling, disfiguring injuries, or by mental disorders may challenge the validity of all his interpersonal relations.

The veteran's own emotional reactions to his condition are of paramount importance. Perhaps the thought which most absorbs him during his convalescence is the question whether he has remained a lovable person: an acceptable lover for his wife, or for any other woman. In the same way his wife may ponder and search her soul to know whether she is still able to love him or not. Even his mother asks the same questions of herself. They, all those who love him, try to imagine him as he is now—perhaps with one arm, or with one eye; they test their feelings toward the man who now walks on amputated legs. Yet much more than conscious willingness is needed in order to really be able to accept the changes in him.

A woman who loves a man develops an image of him in herself, it is this image which she loves. If he is seriously wounded, and bears visible, disfiguring scars, her task is to learn to love him as he is now. She must develop a new image, and this will be in painful discord with the old one in which he was physically perfect.

Complete acceptance or complete rejection of the disabled soldier has been frequently dramatized in the news, over the radio, in the theater, and on the screen. But the reactions to him are seldom so simple, so clear-cut, and seldom so decisive as depicted in these accounts. For it is not only the woman who loves him who is conflictually involved. The wounded soldier himself

finds it difficult to accept himself, to relate his new self to all his interpersonal relations. Discouraged and disheartened, he finds it often impossible to feel the same love for the woman, since his love was predicated on his image of himself as a perfect, strong and whole person. In battle and afterwards, his first thoughts were that life alone is worth living for. In the victory of survival, even through all the pains of recovery, he might have felt that the fates were kind to him. However, the acceptance of the change in himself outside of the war and adjustment to life outside the hospital are difficult tasks to achieve and have to be accomplished from day to day.

Everyone carries in his mind a *body-image* of himself.¹ This body-image is not identical with one's ideal of one's self; it is the sum total of all the senses as directed and coordinated in the central nervous system. The body-image is so deeply ingrained that, after the amputation of a limb, for example, the person feels for a long time, for months and sometimes for years, that the limb is still there. He feels pain or an itching, aching sensation in the missing arm or leg, he lives with the phantom limb which is still a part of his unconscious body-image, while he must learn with conscious effort and self-control to use the prosthesis. Eventually he gets accustomed to this in much the same way as the young child learns to make its first efforts from crawling to walking to climbing stairs—and with as many mishaps. But it takes a long time until the prosthesis itself becomes included in his body-image as an integral part of it. It is basically the same with other injuries. The man with a face or head wound remembers himself as he used to be and he has to steel himself against the jolt he will receive when he looks at himself in the mirror. In a way the task in such cases is even more difficult than the task of those who lost a limb, since the face is so dominant in the body-image, and is so basically the expression of individuality. Whatever the nature of his disability, the wounded soldier at every moment of adjusting himself to the new body-image is instinctively reminded of his old body-image and feels inferior.

¹ Paul Schilder: *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, Ltd., London, 1935.

As long as he is in the hospital surrounded by other wounded with whom he can talk, he believes that he has already accepted his fate. But when he returns to a world in which "everybody is normal" he realizes that it is otherwise. As he walks down Main Street, greeting and being greeted by friends and strangers alike, he feels embarrassed even though he is in uniform and wearing the Purple Heart. He did not anticipate this while still in the hospital; and now he recognizes how much greater his embarrassment will be when he is out of uniform. All that we have learned about the emotional conflicts of the returning soldier—his self-consciousness, his inferiority feelings, his fears of readjustment and of the tensions of unresolved hostilities—all these are valid to an infinitely greater degree for the wounded and the sick.

As long as the soldier was undamaged he lent to his wife his strength and he knew that she was proud of him. Now he feels certain that she cannot help but be embarrassed, too; the more he loved and idealized his wife, the more he will feel that her embarrassment must be greater than his. He will watch for indications of her unhappiness and dissatisfaction or for signs of her conscious efforts at suppression, just as in the hospital he closely scanned the faces of nurses, doctors and others for signs of spontaneous acceptance or rejection. He will project his own self-criticism upon his wife and feel that it is she who is being critical of him. Since he finds it so difficult to accept his new self, he cannot imagine that he may be genuinely, effortlessly accepted by his wife. He questions the sincerity of the love of the woman for whom he wanted to be strong and cannot believe that she loves him now that he has become weak. To reassure himself, he seems to plead with himself and with her by recalling the memories of his courtship, letters, their plans and hopes in which he proudly offered her the very qualities he seems to have lost. Often he becomes tired of his persuasiveness before he has the feeling that he can calm his soul. Often he begins to sense that his own doubts and insecurities engender and increase the conflicts with his wife.

Much advice has been given through many channels to families, wives and mothers, as to how to deal with the wounded

soldier, how to help him in his adjustment, and how "to bear" with his moods. However, the problem is too deep and cannot be handled by antidotes that pertain only to outward behavior and conventions. The wife suffers, not actual physiological pain but acute emotional distress from his disability. If the marriage has substance, it is based on identification; and thus she, too, feels that she has lost a part of herself. At first she, too, felt as he did—that whatever happened, the only thing which really mattered was that he should come through the war alive. But after actual threat to survival no longer exists, she, like himself, must make new plans for her own life. She must learn to adjust to living with a person who in reality is no longer the same love-object whose image she carried within herself. Her identification with him makes her sense all his self-consciousness, inferiority feelings, fears and tensions which seem to be so highly sharpened through his uncertainty in his behavior toward her. On the road to this achievement, they both have to overcome the regrets, the resentment, the feelings of helplessness and irritation which they feel toward the old image. It will require courage, adaptability and continuous, often strained effort to erase the old image which now appears disturbing in its perfection. Yet the love-object is not completely lost, only a part of him has changed. So they may build a new satisfactory relationship out of the many other aspects of their love which originally brought them together.

Good marriages function on the basis of an emotional "give and take." There are women willing to be giving and motherly, yet married to a man quite unable to be the weaker one, to be always only on the receiving end. Such a man may refuse her efforts, and thereby harm them both. Other men are able to continue in a passive, dependent mood and thus, ultimately, exhaust the wife's willingness to give. In either case the wife's willingness to give may be depleted, for alongside the many small jobs in which she exerts her loving ingenuity, she is fighting an inner battle against her identification with him who changed and thereby made herself inferior, too. No matter how much she may suppress this feeling, her ambivalence towards

him becomes alive and the efforts to conceal or deny her own hostile feelings drain her willingness to give.

Some women seem to apprehend their limitations ahead of time. Mrs. X., a young woman of twenty-five, was married after a long courtship to a young man who soon after the marriage was sent to the Pacific. They loved each other passionately. Soon the news reached her that he had been severely wounded at Saipan; one leg had to be amputated above the knee, and there were also other injuries. Mrs. X. reacted to the news with an acute panic; the content of her anxiety was like that in traumatic neuroses—she dreamed and had besetting fantasies of horrifying battles in which terrible mutilations were incurred. Obviously these served to prepare her to accept him as disabled and disfigured. She tried to reassure herself with the thought that he would not be the only one to come back so injured. But all denials were of little avail against the bitter knowledge conveyed to her in her dreams and fantasies. During his convalescence, husband and wife carried on an ardent correspondence, in which they discussed their love and what the new situation would demand of each. He generously offered her her freedom. She replied that marriage in war-time involved risks and she had taken these along with the marriage. Nevertheless, her panic did not subside; rather it spread. Her hostility was turned toward herself and she was in danger of committing suicide. Her conscience required that she love him as much now as she had loved him before, or even more, because of his undeserved misfortune; but she was unable to fulfil this demand. She realized that she was unable to give to him, because under the pressure of this conflict her self became helpless, sick—injured like her husband; she felt that she could not be of any help to him; she had nothing to give. Thus through her condition the emotional balance of their relationship was changed; she was on the receiving end and he was again the stronger one. Unhappily so, since he was acutely aware that it was his misfortune which had activated her neurosis. Her conscious, willing attempt to plan for and become used to the reality had not helped. The mutual hostility mounted; each became so depressed that the alternative was between separation or chronic mental disorder.

Not only wives, but mothers also find it difficult to accept the changes in the disabled and/or disfigured soldier's personality. Mothers as well as wives projected their ego-ideal on to him, and all their expectations are shattered by his severe handicap. Their grief, in most instances, is genuine and justified, and the wounded soldier appreciates it as a solace, if it is not neurotically exaggerated. For him this represents spontaneous expression of their inner readiness to accept him, a manifestation of their identification with him. But if the grief of the mother and wife is neurotically exaggerated, the soldier derives no comfort from it. For he is aware that their despondence merely represents their own suffering; and he feels that they offer this in expiation for their guilt over an inability to accept him as he is now. The rejection and the emotional response need not be as extreme as in the case of Mrs. X. Her love toward her husband, as toward herself, was based on an all-encompassing identification with the physical signs of perfect manhood; her body-image of herself was too painfully violated through her husband's injury. She was too beset by fears that his injury had made her imperfect and incomplete and that it would expose her own basic weakness. Therefore she could not build up a compromise solution by accepting him as injured and herself married to him.

Some women can accept one aspect of the husband's new personality and reject others. It is good if they can permit the conflict to enter consciousness and even more desirable for the future of the marriage if husband and wife can work through together the process which will lead to his acceptance by her and by himself. It is better for both if "they have it out in the open." To him the process is not so new. Before he returned home, he had gone through the painful experience of adaptation to his new self and learned, at least partially, to accept it. He merely repeats it now, or rather he includes the woman who is most important to him in this process of adaptation. He is aware, however, that it is new and hard for his wife, and only if he is able to appreciate her struggle will he be giving her the help which she needs in order to proceed with her identification and to accept it. For in her acceptance of him lies the final verdict of his emotional recovery. Only if they both have confidence

enough to go through this process honestly, without embellishment and dramatics, do they have a real chance. One cannot wear one's "Sunday-best" in the everyday "give and take" of marriage, it will not endure for long.



The normal reaction of a man who has concentrated his ego-strength, his pride, upon recovery is to avoid pity. *Pity* is a peculiar form of "goodness"; it humiliates the receiver and places the donor in a superior position. No wonder that it embitters those who are pitied. There are of course men who want to be pitied; they, we find, however, will also reveal other signs of dependence and neurotic behavior.

If the wounded man were not so gnawed by insecurity and helplessness, the idea of pity would not even enter his mind. But when he now fears that his wife will pity him, this is because he is convinced that her pity is aroused because she cannot love him as he is now. This again is a projection of his own fears and self-pity. The wife who really loves her husband cannot pity him; she can and may pity herself because she suffered through him the same loss he had to face. She feels almost as helpless as he does; she may be embittered toward fate, but she (like Mrs. X.) also may be angry with him, because he is the source of her suffering. Through such angers and resentments both struggle together to a new life. Such conflicts will be more easily overcome in marriages of longer duration, since then husband and wife have already mastered much of their original ambivalence.

Mrs. X. presented, in a pathological exaggeration, the problem of many young brides whose husbands were seriously injured. The shock of the injury is the more threatening to them since they have had no time or occasion to consider life together in all its aspects. The young woman may be afraid of her depreciation of her husband and she may turn away from him even without suffering such panic as Mrs. X. did.

But there is also a more favorable solution. The "new person" may activate genuine motherliness. This alone can be the basis of a happy marriage, only if the change in the personality

of the husband permits the woman a greater security in her relationship to him. Women, who all their lives have struggled with deep feelings of inferiority, can more readily identify with the wounded than with men more secure than themselves. The increased inner security and the diminished fear of being hurt by him allow such women a gratification deep enough to carry on a contented marriage. In these instances, we cannot speak of pity; the inferiority feeling was the expression of the woman's own insecurity which is now balanced by the change she observes in the wounded mate.

Mothers cannot pity the wounded sons either. The son represents a part of the mother's aspirations, gratifications and hopes in life; even more, the body-image of the son becomes a part of the mother's own body-image. She followed his growth all the way from infancy to manhood, and his able-bodied masculinity was a constant source of gratification to her; her pride was almost as great as if it were her own body. This image, the mother's ideal, is shattered if the son is seriously wounded. We read so often of the well-meant reprimands directed toward those mothers who greet the son on crutches or with other disfiguring, incapacitating wounds, with the cry, "My son, what did they do to you? What have they done to me?" The mother, like the wife, feels that she herself is the loser. Thus she cannot pity the son; her sympathy is compassion in its deepest meaning. This is the reason that mothers desire so deeply to share the wounded son's sufferings physically and, since this is impossible, they often become ill as a result of their emotional struggle and regression.

The wounded man is aware of these feelings in his mother, as well as in his wife. Thus he is the one who feels sympathy for them and even guilty because he was the cause of their suffering; he is the one who has disappointed them. This sense of responsibility is not harmful for a wounded man; it helps him to become an adult again, one who is expected to give and he cannot permit himself to receive only. Genuine love rarely errs even if its manifestations may appear illogical and burdensome.

It is different, however, if the mother or the wife, or both, actually cannot accept him. Then they may continue to berate

fate and him by emphasizing that they are the losers; so much so that the wounded man cannot help but recognize that he is not acceptable as he is now, that he no longer can be what he wanted to be for them. Then he feels like a "bad boy" who caused the parent suffering and cannot undo it. He is fortunate if his insight can tell him that his mother is really pitying herself rather than him. Then he may become angry with her and this hostility may protect him from his inferiority feelings.

It is fortunate for him if it is his mother who responds this way; then he can turn to his wife or to the woman who can accept him. But if his wife rejects him, the acceptance of his mother carries with it danger for his further emotional development. It tides him over until he finds a woman who will love him. If the mother—as sometimes happens—takes emotional advantage of the situation; if she accepts the son with the inner gratification that he is now hers completely and forever, since he cannot or will not want to have a wife, then his regression is inevitable. And the physically wounded man is thus forced to give up his capacity to develop into an emotionally mature individual.



The father of the wounded soldier feels strongly identified with him. What he feels is not pity, but a loss, a depreciation of his own ego-ideal. Fathers, especially if they are old or dependent on the son, often cannot recover from the loss sufficiently to be helpful to the son; men with stronger egos and of greater achievement overcome the emotional struggle and often can help the son in the process of new adaptation.

Brothers, friends, and other rivals often can feel nothing but pity for the wounded. In spite of their readiness to help, they may feel a hidden satisfaction as if they had won the race. Even if they can repress this hostility as quickly as it emerges, they necessarily feel guilty. Pity comes from a suppressed feeling of hostility and superiority. It may be difficult to describe the psychodynamics of feelings, and yet everybody senses how they function. The disabled soldier expects pity from those whose competitive hostility he recognizes and towards whom he him-

self feels hostile. Thus, especially if he feels at a disadvantage, the veteran watches with embitterment for signs of pity in those with whom he once competed. The internal conflict, because of the basic, long-lived guilt and hostility, is highly charged in both opponents. Its effects and manifestations are well delineated in the following example: The second oldest son of a patriarchal family was the only one of three sons not to enter the Army. His profession deferred him from military service; it also afforded him the satisfaction of rendering important services to the country. He worked hard and successfully. Although he had a family of his own, all his spare time was devoted to the self-imposed task of family counsellor and consoler. He regarded it as almost a sacred duty to do everything in his power to console and comfort his parents and to help the wife of his older brother. This brother was wounded twice. When the news of his first injury arrived, our patient was little affected by it; actually he welcomed it, since it gave him one more opportunity to be helpful to his parents who were extremely anxious about their oldest son. The brother recovered and went back to duty and about a year later he was wounded again, and this time so severely that his recovery was doubtful. He survived. After this was ascertained and the family received details of the nature of his expected incapacitation, our patient became seriously disturbed. He had severe anxiety and depression; to escape these he drank heavily and finally he was not able to work. He needed psychiatric help; he was anxious for it; and already in the first consultation he expressed an acute desire to recover before meeting his wounded brother—but he did not know why he was so urgent about this. His dreams revealed his fear of the brother's anger and hostility. He felt that he no longer could justify himself that he had done his best. It became evident that he, the younger brother, felt that he had succeeded in a competition which had been going on between himself and his older brother ever since he could remember. Hence he could neither enjoy nor consolidate his successes. Through his drinking and finally through his inability to work, he had put himself in a situation as helpless and as close to defeat as he imagined his brother's to be. In this way he could feel that the competition was solved;

he had given up his advantages and thus his brother could have no reason now to hate him.



It has been a topic of frequent discussion that soldiers severely wounded in battle developed combat neuroses much less often than those who escaped injury. The explanation for this lies, in part, in the fact that their physical injury offered a protection—it removed them from further dangers, from further battles, while those not physically injured had to face the continuation of the same dreadful dangers and often could not help but succumb to fear.

In addition to this obvious protection, physical suffering also may serve other functions in the emotional household of the injured. If there is any one time when the individual must exert all the strength of his whole personality in assuring himself of its continuation, then it is at times of acute dangers and threats to bodily existence. Those present at first-aid battle stations and in field hospital operating rooms have witnessed this again and again. The wounded soldier would rather suffer intolerable pain than be "put under" by narcotics; he wants to see what is being done to him, to feel the pain, to sense that he is still breathing, even to be bathed in the sweat of his suffering; he clings to his consciousness with all his will-power, with all his desire to live; otherwise he might die without knowing it. After such struggle, such a conquest of overwhelming pain, the gratification of survival gives the wounded man an immeasurable satisfaction which elevates his ego; he becomes almost manic. The zest of being alive may change the meaning and effects of his suffering. Even though he may later become depressed as he realizes the full import of his disability, his psychological rehabilitation began with that moment when he realized that emotionally he is the same as he was before; he is still himself, and he lives. Only this matters. From this point on, while he is learning to accept himself, the disabled man goes through a process of maturation. From this he may obtain added ego-strength, ability to face life and its problems. Since everything seems smaller and simpler as compared with death he can face

the future with a greater equanimity and inner security. Thus, in spite of actual crippling effects, the wounded soldier may be a serene and secure person, one who can love and therefore one who feels that he can be loved. Thus it often happens that he is not neurotic or that he is much less neurotic than he was before. His struggle and victory gave him courage and confidence; he is ready for a new start.



Serious bodily injury activates in the injured as well as in those who love him an emotional process which is similar to mourning. Its goal is a reconciliation with the reality which, if achieved, enables the veteran as well as his family to continue in a mutually productive relationship. The psychiatric casualty has in some respects a harder task to face, and his family a more difficult adjustment to make. He comes home without obvious scars; however, his personality has changed. Whether his symptoms were brought on by a sudden shock or by a slow exhaustion of his adaptive functions, it occurred without the elevating experience of triumph over the fear of death. Just the opposite happened. The danger of death was with him endlessly and unbearably, and finally he succumbed to the burden. His adaptability was already exhausted before he returned home. Will he be able to solve the new problems of adaptation?

He suffers from inferiority feelings; he is aware of his lessened functional capacity, and he responds to the stigma of being an "NP." So does his family. The members of his family cannot free themselves from the general attitude. It is a hardship to be the parent of an injured man, or to be his wife, but one can bear it without a desire for apology. The family of the neurotic casualty cannot identify with him in pride. He is not a hero—he does not count as such even if his breakdown came after heroic exploits. His family, even if they understand his weakness, cannot love him for it, they can love him only in spite of it. This, however, is a new basis of a relationship; probably not as new for his parents as it is for his wife. His parents knew him as a dependent child; even if their ideal is now shattered, they may resort to the past in which he needed help. His

wife will, however, ask herself whether this is the person whom she loved; she may watch his demands and anxieties to weigh what burdens and limitations they may cause for her. Needless to say, the manifestations of his symptoms, the degree of irreversibility of his personality change, as well as the helping love which he encounters may determine the future of the veteran.



In our discussion throughout this book we dealt with the emotional conflicts of the veteran and his family. We stated that there was no sharp line of distinction between normal and what we call mentally and emotionally pathological. This is true for the veteran as well as for the members of his family. We have shown that the changes in the interpersonal relationships between the soldier and his family may activate in either of them the pathological aspects of the personality which were hidden before, they may break down adaptations which functioned well under less exacting circumstances. Not only the soldier but also the members of his family may break down under the strain of the new interpersonal situation. The crux of the individual situation cannot be covered by any general scheme. However, we may grade into a series the problems involved in the mutual adaptability of the veteran and his family. At the beginning we find those veterans who did not show serious changes in their personalities and who returned to live with a family which had not changed in any pathological sense. From this most normal and fortunate interpersonal relationship, we may follow up all shades and variations of adaptive difficulties caused either by the veteran's pathology or by that of the dominant member of his family and we may finally arrive at the other extreme of the series to those who became unadaptable and lasting neuropsychiatric casualties.

The veteran and his family, their difficulties and their strenuous efforts, represent a large field of endeavor for all those who want to help in improving human relationships. Some will turn to their ministers for counseling and guidance, others to their teachers. Some will hope that the right vocation and adequate work will solve all their problems; others will turn to social

agencies and in eliminating one or another of the problems within the family, lessen the burden which each of its members has to bear. In many cases psychiatric treatment will be necessary to mobilize the paralyzed emotions, to master the anxiety or to loosen the rigidity, thus to open up new possibilities for adaptation.

Chapter 15

PARENTHOOD IN WAR

In our age of "planned parenthood" we have reasons to be surprised by the increased birth rate during the war. To explain this phenomenon we will go back to the trauma of separation and the emotional attitudes in its wake.

Under the stress of separation the soldier, keenly apprehensive of the uncertainties and dangers of his future, seeks guarantee of the permanency of his self. Marriage in itself, even if it was well established, appears not enough. The relationship, threatened with interruption, even termination, does not give either husband or wife the sense of rootedness and obligation from which to draw security and the conviction of oneness and belongingness during the long period of separation. Thus the urgency for the child emerges. For the child is the manifestation of the marriage, it represents its gratifications and its responsibilities. The child, in biological and social sense, is the goal of marriage.

The external circumstances of war, in our society, would seem to contradict the natural urge for parenthood. The father-to-be knows that he will not be able to help his wife during the pregnancy, he will not share her worries or her elations, he will not be able to see his baby perhaps for months, for years, if ever. Yet he is deeply happy in being able to go away with the feeling that his life is continued, that he has created a tie which gives him a sense of duty and aspiration to life. He is almost consciously aware that he uses this fact of survival in his child as a means to increase the chances of his own survival; it helps him to overcome hardships and deprivations; he feels that it is his duty to come back to be a father. And at the same time his wife is convinced that she can save herself from the pain and depriva-

tion inherent in the separation since pregnancy and the child represent the continuation of the marital relationship.



Since nature connects paternity with the gratification of the sexual urge, one rarely stops to analyze the emotional factors involved in fatherhood. While the word *motherhood* has so many connotations because it encompasses such an important part of woman's life, its complement *fatherhood* sounds strange and new. Yet there are emotional, originally instinctive trends, as well as social trends, integrated in this phenomenon which complement those that find expression in motherhood. The great experiment, the war, has exposed them and made them accessible to further description.

The trauma of separation increased the man's dependence upon all his existing relationships, it activated and deepened the need for his wife's love (as well as for his mother's). These dependent needs may be in conflict with his ego-aspirations; he would lose self-esteem were he to recognize his regressive tendencies. In his conscious desire for procreation, however, he overcomes through his virility these regressive trends. While he achieves gratification in love he reassures himself of his masculinity, thus elevating himself above his fears. At the same time he pledged to his wife his willingness to take on responsibilities, thus creating in his child the representation of his maturity. When the man fears that his survival is threatened, *his desire for reproduction becomes a process of reparation, a means of overcoming anxiety*. The psychology of fatherhood can be best presented by pointing out two main roots: the urge to conquer his own dependence by love, is one and to fulfil man's desire to become like his father, is another.

With the act of reproduction he not only asserts his biological function, he also achieves an ambition active since his early childhood—his competition with his father. This competition is the manifestation of the biological tendency to develop to masculine maturity. During the process of growth it had many phases and aspects; sometimes it was repressed with fear, other times it was emphasized with pride. Now, when he is giving a

child to his wife, he not only conquers his fears but he also reaches a new level of integration in his personality. When he has to separate from his wife now, he is not merely leaving a child behind him who will be cared for by his wife as he was taken care of by his mother; he is leaving as a father who will live through and for his child. While he himself has become a link in the chain of the generations between his father and his child, he has built another step on the ladder to his own psycho-sexual maturity.

The emotional relationship between father and child proceeds on two levels; one is the father's identification with his child and the other is the father's identification with his own father. Expressed in terms of these identifications, the emotional needs and gratifications of fatherhood can be easily understood. Not all aspects of these identifications come to the fore simultaneously and with the same intensity. The personality of the father as well as external circumstances will influence the emotional manifestations of his *fatherliness*. A man, active and secure in his position at home, will not be as longing for the identification with his child as is the soldier. Even if he is unconscious of this identification, the soldier-father often fantasies that he himself is loved by his wife while she takes care of his child. In the same way, the soldier-father becomes more aware than those who can enjoy fatherhood at home that being a father elevates him from a deprived individual to one who is able to give.

This desire for fatherly giving, the expression of tenderness, was one of the often described emotional manifestations of the American soldier. There were innumerable reports illustrating the soldiers' fatherly attitude. Whatever the soldier's age and situation, he responded spontaneously to children. Not only in foreign countries when the soldier felt lonesome, but the atmosphere of the training camp alone was enough to increase his desire to love children. Soldiers coming to town from their camps looked for a child whom they could toss on their shoulder, to whom they could give candy, whom they could baby. Young soldiers who were not fathers yet were just as eager in this as older soldiers who sought in the strange child a substitute for their own children at home—who, by playing with children,

practiced their favorite games, the gestures so much enjoyed by their own children.

Whatever the instinctual roots of fatherhood are, until it becomes the emotional relationship of the father to his child—or the fatherly attitude of any adult man toward any child—fatherliness draws on various emotional resources which were moulded by the various influences during the development of the individual. His mother's or his father's tenderness which he experienced as a baby forms a reservoir of love from which he may easily give to his own child. Whether his tenderness originates in the identification with his parents or in the identification with his child the desire for tenderness toward the child, toward any child, grows under the stress of deprivation. For tender, sublimated love is one of the most important factors in the ego's capacity to maintain its integration, in its ability to avoid regression.

Before we describe the emotional situation which motivates the soldier's desire for fatherhood when he returns, we will first discuss the emotional constellation which prompts the woman to respond to her husband's desire.



The trauma of separation necessarily affects the woman. She, too, is anxious about his leaving, which means to her not only loss of love and security, but also loss of a part of herself. The hardships and dangers of pregnancy during war-time would seem, actually, to oppose the tendencies of the woman's instinct for self-preservation. Yet women accept pregnancy during war-time with a deep sense of gratification, much more often than one would expect. Not only do married women have the desire to bring their pregnancy to completion, but even those who will have an illegitimate child. Also mothers of one or two children may be eager to be pregnant and have a baby while their husband is away. For the wife, pregnancy and the child represent the permanence of the marital relationship; she is convinced that she never will feel alone if she has a baby. If this is true, and on the conscious level it appears so, we may conclude that neither a biological need for reproduction, nor even a

deeply stirred tendency for self-preservation, but rather only a partial aspect of these—the need for protection against loneliness, the need for assurance of oneness and belongingness—was enough to increase the woman's desire for pregnancy.

This desire, though it may seem to jeopardize the aims of self-preservation, is rooted in woman's biology. Her reproductive function is a cyclical phenomenon which is regulated by the ovarian hormones. Experimental and clinical evidence reveals the interaction between the cyclic rise and fall of these hormones and the emotional manifestations of sexuality¹—the desire for sexual activity and the desire for motherhood. While the periodic alternation of these tendencies is easily observable in the behavior of mammals, it is not necessarily apparent in human behavior. For the primary biological tendencies in women are usually disguised by cultural patterns as well as by the prevalent emotional atmosphere between husband and wife. Yet closer analysis of woman's behavior, especially of her moods, dreams and fantasies, reveals that they change with the course of the *ovarian cycle*.

A cycle is the period from one menstruation to another. During the first part, when the cycle is under the control of *estrogens*, the woman's desire is directed outwardly toward the sexual partner. During the second part of the cycle, which is under the control of *progestins* (the hormone which prepares the uterus for pregnancy), the woman's mood expresses her desire for motherhood. The middle of the sexual cycle is of special importance since it is then that the ripe ovum leaves its follicle and becomes ready for impregnation: *ovulation*. The accompanying emotional state is in accordance with the biological readiness for conception. This is expressed by intensified eroticized feelings which produce a sense of relaxation and an increased desire for receiving the sexual partner. The desire for intercourse is conscious in the adult woman while the desire for impregnation and for pregnancy is expressed largely in dreams and fantasies.

¹ Therese Benedek and Boris Rubenstein: *The Sexual Cycle in Women*, Psychosomatic Medicine Monographs, National Research Council, Washington, D. C., 1942.

The desire for pregnancy, however, may become conscious and even compelling in exceptional situations such as during the time of impending separation. Then the wife's motherliness is especially activated by the husband's need for proofs of her love. Thus the woman's biologically motivated desire and the man's urgency for a child complement and reinforce each other. In such situations the basic biological tendencies assert themselves against less opposition than at other times.



We do not intend to discuss the complete *psychology of pregnancy*,² but only those factors which influence the pregnancy during war-time separation, and therefore, affect not only the mother but also the child, and later, the total complex of readjustment within the family. For, although war-time pregnancy (planned or unplanned) is welcomed as a bliss and a restoration, it often turns out to be the source of great unhappiness and maladjustment.

Pregnancy during war-time represents for the woman not only the fulfilment of all wishes and fantasies ever related to motherhood, it represents also the continuation of her marital happiness; it is the denial of the separation. It plays many functions in women's psychic economy.

During pregnancy it is easy to wait. The whole physiology is tuned to a serene, contented waiting. Even women who are usually tense, nervous, excitable or even subject to anxiety states, are surprised about their calmness during pregnancy. They do not have the same emotional responses which they would have otherwise; even the concern and distress over the husband are not accompanied with the same anxiety and tenseness. The physiology of pregnancy, which aims to protect the growing foetus, protects the mother also from undue excitement (but not always from shock). To this physiologically determined self-satisfied state is added the indulgence of the environment which permits and encourages the self-centered attitude of the pregnant woman. When the woman is deprived of the care of a

² Helene Deutsch: *The Psychology of Women*, Vol. II, Grune & Stratton, Inc., New York, 1945.

loving husband, the other members of her family will be anxious to treat her with special consideration and kindness. She enjoys many privileges. Her exceptional situation changes her emotional attitude toward her absent husband and his to her. While she is pregnant, husband and wife have a common expectation. If he were at home and they could exchange their emotions, their mutual fantasy would be nourished in many ways. While he is away, the expectation will become a part of the fantasy life of each. The husband will worry for his pregnant wife, but he will not expect her to worry about him. His wife is at home, secure and safe, yet pregnant and therefore exposed to danger, which he probably magnifies. Thus she becomes more important than himself. And the wife feels the same way; for the sake and importance of her child she feels that it is only right and proper that she be the center of all attention. Thus she can permit herself to withdraw from active participation in everyday life routines and to fantasy about her child and her husband with greater freedom than she could if he were at home. His presence would keep the marriage on the level of reality.

Pregnancy, even normally, is characterized by a state of introversion, of withdrawal and of free-floating fantasies. With the father of her child away from the scene, her fantasies are not checked by the steadying experiences of reality. The picture of her husband may become vague; it may sometimes carry the image of her father or all fathers she had fantasied in her childhood and adolescence, and the child growing in her may come to represent increasingly the fantasy child of her past instead of the real child of the future. Her child may become in her fantasy a substitute for her little brother or sister whose mother she once wanted to be. It is easy to recognize that the continuation of such fantasies of the past into the present contains within itself the possibilities of conflicts in future relationships. For they do not represent real object-relationships. Here, however, we wish only to stress that if the pregnant woman loves her husband, he becomes more and more idealized as a part of the child she is bearing. But if she does not love him enough, she may exclude the father of her child from her fantasies during her pregnancy. She may then fantasy only about her child and herself—as

though she had forgotten the husband. She may feel emotionally satisfied in the feeling that she loves her unborn child. "Love," however, is not the correct term to express the emotion of such a mother for her unborn child. If she loves her husband then she may love the unborn child as a part of him, but if he is excluded from her fantasies about the child, then the foetus exists emotionally only as a part of herself. This is complete identification, or complete self-love, but not real love.

The motherliness manifested during pregnancy and toward an infant is not the same emotional attitude as the relationship which the mother will express later. During pregnancy and the period of lactation, the emotions are strongly under hormonal control. The hormones which support the pregnancy and the nursing create an emotional state in which the ego plays only a small part. The psychosexual processes which relegate the ego to the background are like those which prepared the woman emotionally for motherhood. During every menstrual cycle, while the uterus is in the state of preparation for pregnancy—whether pregnancy occurs or not—the woman in her dreams and fantasies repeats her developmental relationship to her mother: the competition with her, the desire to surpass her, and the wish to be loved, protected and taken care of by her. During pregnancy and lactation, the hormones which cause the surging desire to nurse and to take care of the baby reawaken the mother's own dependent needs and her own infantile desire to be taken care of. This emotional state, from the point of view of ego-psychology, is a regressive one; it has, however, an important function. It paves the way for the mother's identification with her infant, and through this serves as one of the mainsprings of the mother's tenderness: for the mother, during pregnancy and for a time after parturition, the baby is still just a part of her loved self; only slowly does the infant become an object to love as separate from herself.

Primarily it is the woman's genuine motherliness—the *acceptance of motherhood*—which determines her emotional attitude toward pregnancy, and this is only secondarily influenced by external factors, even by such as the legitimacy of her child or her relationship to the father of her child. Many factors—

physiological as well as sociological—are responsible for the conviction of fulfilment which mothers of even illegitimate children may exhibit. During the war the contentment (which usually lasts during the pregnancy only) of unmarried mothers was facilitated since illegitimacy did not meet with as much social disapproval. Besides this, these mothers-to-be were also aware that many married women were spending their pregnancy alone, too. This afforded the illegitimate mother great emotional support; she did not need to envy her more fortunate sister who, too, had to carry through her pregnancy without the presence of a husband. Some of these unmarried mothers seemed to derive a special gratification of an unconscious fantasy—the fantasy of parthenogenesis—the primary dream of being able to produce a child alone. Women with such unconscious attitudes toward procreation and children may become mothers of high emotional integration. There were also, of course, among these unmarried mothers some whose egos were not quite well developed; they lived complacently, almost vegetatively, during the pregnancy and did not face the problems which they would have to meet after the child was born. There were still many others who were illegitimate mothers in a technical sense only; otherwise their relationship to the father of the coming child was assured and well established and would lead to marriage or would have led to it if war-time catastrophes had not interfered with their mutual hopes.

At the end of the pregnancy, the contented mood is often dimmed by tense expectation, by the fear of pain, by the fear of being damaged or even of dying. The fear of child-birth, which often interferes essentially with woman's sexual life and reproductive function, appears to be almost negligible during the contented, blissful, hormonally well-balanced pregnancy of those women who have a normal desire for motherhood. Yet, even in them this fear comes to the fore when the hour of delivery approaches, especially if they feel lonesome without the comforting presence and participation of the husband. Many women, even the happily married, may become doubtful of the wisdom of their pregnancy when it approaches its end. They may question their courage, their capacity, and their willingness to assume

all the responsibilities implied in the task of motherhood. Some, especially those whose desire for a child is not primarily strong, try to recall the whys and wherefores which lead to their pregnancy and their memory works selectively. They do not remember so much their own wishes at the time of the impending separation—their own desires for all that pregnancy and the child represent. They recall more vividly the husband's anxiousness and thus come to believe that they accepted the pregnancy for his sake only or only out of fear that if they did not comply with his desire, they might feel guilty later. This doubting attitude toward the pregnancy develops especially in those women whose fear of child-birth interferes with their motherliness. It may occur also in those women whose relationship to their husband, to the father of their child, had changed so that they could no longer trust him. Feeling that their confidence was betrayed, they no longer desire to continue the relationship with him. What one wanted so passionately while one was actually in love, stimulated sexually and physiologically stirred by the fear of separation, may become a burden in the present and a hindrance in the future. No wonder that delivery is anticipated with tension and apprehension, and with little self-confidence. All these factors may play a greater or lesser role in the emotional life of the expectant mother in normal times, too; but we must realize how much more important they become in fantasy as well as in actuality when the husband, the father, cannot assert his correcting influence upon the fantasies of the expectant mother.

The delivery itself is often followed by a depressed mood, by a "let-down feeling" whether the labor was difficult or easy. There are many physiological and emotional reasons for this. We mention only the one which is important in understanding the war-time mother. The young mother who expected so much happiness in her motherhood finds herself void of the emotions she anticipated in fantasy. This occurs frequently, especially when a first child is born. The young mother is overcome by surprise and guilt in her realization that the infant, which was once a loved part of herself, after its separation from her body appears to be only an object which she cannot help but view critically. Anxious to establish the desired emotional tie, she

investigates the infant to determine whether it fulfils her fantasies. If she wished for a son it is a great relief if it is a boy and a great disappointment if it is a girl. If she fantasied that her infant would be the likeness of its father, she immediately looks for traces of resemblance. If it appears to be different from the ideal of her fantasies, the other sex, or undeveloped and seemingly unlovable, the mother may become very depressed because of her lack of love for the infant. If she had previously entertained doubts about her motherliness, her anxiety may now become acute. Such emotional unbalance, if within the range of normal responses to delivery, is overcome within a few days as the mother receives proof that she and her infant are loved and accepted by a happy young father.

This indicates *why and how war-time separation puts motherliness to such a hard test*. If there is no external love to enhance her libido, the mother needs to have more internal resources of love. Fortunately, the physiological sources of libidinous feelings are soon replenished and this time with a tendency which is not directed toward the sexual partner, but toward the baby. Her originally receptive identification with the baby is reestablished; now it functions as a desire to feed, to nurse and to take care of the infant. The mother's sensual needs are expressed in her need to establish physical contact with the infant, to caress it, to hold it. Thus the infant becomes the continuation and expression of the mother's capacity to love. It becomes the carrier of and the substitute for her relationship to her husband; she soon draws her infant into the triangle which normally exists between the two parents and the child, and the absent father is made to feel his belongingness through the fantasies of the wife-and-mother.

As time passes and the state of physiological hormonally controlled motherliness is over—i.e., after lactation—the mother's psychosexual household changes again. Her usual sexual cycle, interrupted for reproduction, is reestablished; her desire for heterosexual gratification is awakened, and her emotional and physiological need for her husband increases. She believed that she wanted the child so much in order not to feel alone, to have something of his and hers to love, to keep her busy and inter-

ested, to help her think of him. Although all these intentions are fulfilled, they do not now conduce to a waiting as pleasurable and calm as during pregnancy. She realizes that it would be much easier to care for the baby with tenderness if her husband were with her in reality and not merely in her fantasy. The secret and the value of his presence is not in his aiding in the care of the baby or in assisting in household chores; his real contribution is that he keeps the mother sexually gratified and that he expresses demands and desires which give meaning to her daily routine. Thus while he replenishes her reservoir of love from which the mother easily gives the infant its share, he also stimulates her ego to mature. The mother, less concentrated upon herself, can easily tend to the baby and to other duties and interests as well. It is quite different when she is alone and feels that the internal resources of her love are waning. The infant naturally needs her care and needs to be loved. However, her love and tenderness do not come easily. She feels dissatisfied and unhappy. If her love is strong enough and her motherliness is genuine, she may derive satisfaction from the great responsibility given to her. Even this may be overshadowed by the fatigue and restlessness of lonesome nights which only serve to increase her desire for more immediate gratification; she becomes exhausted by resentment—she has to give love and attention, but there is no one to give her the love and attention she now craves. Thus her responsibility appears as a heavy burden and she becomes tired, depressed and restless. Afraid of her conflicts between her love for her child and her husband on the one hand and her actual needs for diversion and gratification on the other, she begins to look for a scapegoat for her mood. This may be the war, generally, or her husband who is not present, or her child who is "too much to take care of alone."

Many women become worried and depressed, others become anxious when they realize that their interest in the child is lessening, that they are bored at home and desire stimulation outside the home. These attitudes, as we have already indicated, may have unhappy consequences. Sexual infidelity, and/or promiscuity, does not express mature heterosexual behavior. It is rather the manifestation of a weak ego which steadily gives way

under the pressure of conflicts. Unfortunately, the mother's regressive tendencies also embrace the child. Newspapers, radio and magazines have told us of the extreme cases, of the small children, even new-born infants, who were locked in the home, in the apartment while the mother was passing the time away in a tavern. Social agencies, courts and even day-nurseries can tell us about many more. But the rejection of the child need not appear in the easily recognizable form of desertion, physical neglect, or senseless punishment. Many women, in compensating for such impulses, attend to their task conscientiously; however, unable to feel love, they starve the child emotionally. This, as well as the other solutions for which the neurotic mother gropingly reaches, does not represent an action of her free will. It is the result of the same identification which forms the basis of the relationship between mother and child. Just as a contented mother projects her imagination upon the child and sees in it the realization of her own aspirations, hopes and happiness, so the depressed and conflictful mother projects her own doubts, self-criticism and inferiority feelings upon her child. She cannot love the child who has become the manifestation of her own dejected, rejected or neglected self.

These conflicts, which interfere with normal motherliness, can usually be explained by the developmental history of the individual. Within a large range they are mitigated and overcome by the emotional maturation which results from marital life and motherliness. The frustrations of war-time separation deprive the woman of the benevolent, constructive influences of marriage and burden her mainly with its responsibilities. For some women, this may be enough to initiate a vicious circle of regression which influences the child's development as well as the future of her marriage. Others, more fortunate, are undisturbed in their basic motherliness by war-time frustrations. They raise one or several children during the separation; they are serene, tender and untroubled because they are able to keep before them a picture of the family as it should be and shall be when their husband, their children's father, returns.



In our interpretations of the motives which mobilized the desire for parenthood we gave central importance to the emotions which dominate the mood of separation: fear and dependence. What then were the motives which mobilized the desire for parenthood when the soldier returned home on leave or furlough?

One of them might have been conscious: in many instances the couple suppressed the desire for a child at the time of the first separation. Whatever the reasons for this were, during the time of separation they often regretted their cautiousness. There were many women who, even though they had one or more children, longed for a baby while their husbands were away. When he returned, this pent-up desire sought fulfilment. Husband and wife knew that separation would come again soon. However, the soldier on furlough did not go back to the unknown; he returned to his organization; he had his place in the group. This security in his group diminished the fear of the future, even if it should be overseas duty. Thus his anxiety and his dependent feelings toward his wife were not as strong as they were at the time of their first separation. This gave him a greater security in his virility, which was much stirred and gratified by his wife's desire and love. Thus he could face future responsibilities with greater equanimity. In this emotional situation it was not so much fear which mobilized the instinct of survival, but the exhilaration, the happiness of survival which celebrated its triumph in the desire for the child.

The women who became pregnant after such a period of conscious longing for motherhood concentrated their love upon the infant, and awaited the final return of the husband with less conflict and guilt than those who felt that they had been tricked into their motherhood by anxiety rather than by love.



After the veteran returns to civilian life, becoming a father again plays an amazingly important role. The motivation for this desire cannot be the same as it was when he left for the Army—anxiety in the urge for survival cannot play the same role as it did then! Yet, only the emphasis shifted—the basic motivation remained the same.

During the war, when the veterans were discharged on account of their physical or emotional disability, they came home not en masse but individually. They often felt inferior toward the civilians and even guilty toward them and/or toward the soldiers who had to go on fighting. In this mood of depression and insecurity, love and the ability to assume civilian responsibilities were the most important curative factors. Many young veterans used marriage and parenthood as means to their emotional rehabilitation, and broke down only after—for some reason or other—their attempt did not succeed. We described already (page 91) the reactions of a veteran to such an event.

This was the Marine who married after he was discharged from the hospital. He had gone through several hard battles. As if creating a new life was the most important factor in the healing of a man who experienced so much killing, he was anxious that his young wife should have a child soon. He worked hard to establish his family and was quite happy during the pregnancy of his wife. She delivered a still-birth. This was a serious trauma to the veteran. The child, unconsciously and even consciously, represented to him the means of restoration, the possibility to become a "good man" in spite of all his war experiences. When his longing for fatherhood was thwarted he responded as if he never again could be a "good man"; he was not good enough to be a father. His capacity for love disintegrated. He felt depressed, dejected; unable to love himself, he became hostile to his wife. He projected his dissatisfaction with himself onto her and found fault with her for not giving him a child; his anger and hostility increasing, he blamed her as if she had killed the child, and even this was a disguise of his own aggression toward his wife which finally reached psychotic intensity. If this child had lived, his need for emotional restoration would have been fulfilled, and this probably would have saved him as it had many others.

The emotional situation of those who returned after victory was won, naturally, was different. Yet they were not free from fears and insecurities either. These veterans also felt the urgent need to reestablish themselves in their civilian status. Economic security is one of the external instruments of rehabilitation.

Within his family the veteran has to establish himself not only financially but also psychologically. He has to become the head of his family again. His virility is the means to this aim. Now his life is secure. Relieved from anxiety he is not dependent upon his wife, at least not in the same sense as he was when he left for the Army. Now he is threatened, not in his life but in his aspirations. His insecurity represents a mitigated form of anxiety, which we found to be an important factor in the urge for reproduction. This anxiety is—at least in his consciousness—outweighed by the happiness of his return which gives his virility a triumphant character. To this is added that his masculine tendencies appear to have more justification now than at the time of separation, since now he will stay with his family and he will be able to give his wife and child the love and care which fatherhood in our society implies. Such an expression of his self-confidence remedies his insecurity in his relationship to his wife. Not in every case, of course, but in many instances the husband is consciously aware that by impregnating his wife he intended to establish an emotional balance in which his superiority was secured by his wife's dependence upon him.

Post-war parenthood plays an important role not only for the individual veteran in relationship to his wife, but in the total emotional and economic readjustment of the country. Many women who worked outside of their homes will accept the reconversion and become housewives again for the reward of having a baby. They may hesitate; they may want the baby and at the same time be afraid of the sacrifice it may exact from them. However, the physiological process of pregnancy is such that it facilitates the wife's readjustment to home. The placid emotional state which accompanies pregnancy offers the woman permission to indulge in her dependence and the lost independence loses its attractiveness. This gives the veteran a real sense of security in relationship to his wife! His wife is dependent upon him, he knows that he is needed; his fears about her independence may calm down since she does not seem to regret it in her absorption during pregnancy. Through the common experience of expectant parenthood their identification grows deeper. Finally, the pregnancy enhances their emotional willingness to

learn each other's habits and wishes, strength and weakness. While in common fantasies they prepare the love for the yet unborn child, they may also find new solutions for their problems (even for that of the wife's desire for independent work).

We will now say a word about this child, about his fortunate position in the family. If we compare the emotional situation of such a child with that of a child born while the father was away, the difference becomes striking. The war child has no father in reality and has the mother only partially; the mother, deprived and often harrassed, may reject or emotionally neglect the child. The post-war child represents the release of long tension, fear and deprivation; it is the projection of the hopes of the father and is loved and cared for by a happy mother.

Chapter 16

FATHERS AND CHILDREN

The psychodynamic triangle begins in the fantasy of the parents during pregnancy and continuously becomes recharged with emotion during the development of the child. Whenever a separation occurs this complex interpersonal relationship is interrupted. The young mother has the child and with it she continues the relationship with her husband in her fantasy. The child, however, does not have any actual relationship with the father. A photograph, or many of them, no matter how many times it is pointed at with the word "daddy" or the mother's loving comment, "If only your father could see you," does not have any emotional reality for the child except as he senses faintly the mother's feeling toward her husband.

In very early infancy this lack does not influence the child's development directly since this phase of development is determined almost solely by the relationship between mother and infant. Indirectly, however, the father's absence may assert itself even in this phase of development by disturbing the mother's equanimity. If this untoward influence can be avoided and the infant-mother relationship is undisturbed, the infant, under the sheltering security of routinely recurring gratification, develops to a gradually broadened scope of experience. The infant, normally as early as the second half of the first year, recognizes his father, even if the contact is not too intimate. From this time on, his interests encompass his father in a greater or lesser degree, depending upon the time the father spends with him. If the father is consistently absent, as during war-time separation, the child remains emotionally concentrated upon the mother, who continues to be the only source of learning and gratification. Since the infant's learning, as all emotional learning, is achieved through the process of unconscious identification, it is easy to

perceive and to comprehend the gap created in the child's development if the father's personality does not enter into the sphere of identification. At such an early age, this does not necessarily mean developmental retardation for girls, since their growth is determined by identification with the mother. For boys, however, it is a different matter. If the normal identification with the father at this early pre-oedipal phase is missing, the long period of exclusive dependence on the mother may definitely influence his psychosexual development; identification with her may outbalance the masculine tendencies which failed to be stimulated in the absence of identification and rivalry with the father. If, after the father returns, competition with him becomes an emotional necessity, the little boy, unprepared for it, may withdraw into a regressive dependence on the basis of his identification with the mother; or, if he can grow up to assert his masculine tendencies in competition, he may be affected with shyness and undue anxiety.

It is not within the scope of this presentation to describe the developmental complications which we may expect and which we have already observed in the development of children during the war. But in general it may be said that children, born and raised while the father was absent, experience their first contact with him late, and that they are emotionally unprepared for the first meeting since there is no emotional growth without identification. Thus his first appearance on the scene is an unexpected, sudden, shock-like reality, adjustment to which is a complex and fateful experience.

If the soldier was the father of one or more children, we may easily recognize the break in the child's emotional development induced by the traumatic experience of his "disappearance," even though it may be covered up by the subsequent developmental adjustment of the child. There is a marked difference in the traumatic effects of his disappearance, depending upon whether the separation occurred before, during, or after the oedipal phase. Before this crucial phase is reached (around the age of three), it seems that the father has not enough independent reality for the child. Thus the child's relationship to his father will be fostered by the mother's attitude alone. She con-

sciously tries to maintain the child's image of his father by stimulating his memories of his father. If the father left during the oedipal phase, when the child was about four to five years old, the child adjusts to his absence with fantasies of his own. Thus, a little girl, whom we observed, whose father left for the Army when she was four years old, continued the identification with her mother, looking forward to the father's return with the hope that he would return to her alone and that he would give her a baby. The absence of the father permitted an exaggeration of oedipal fantasies, which was uncorrected by reality, partly because the mother herself almost consciously felt that the little daughter was a rival. For the girl it was a deep disappointment to discover that her father, upon his return, treated her as a child, that he had really come home to the wife and mother. Similarly, but with a different emphasis, a little boy, whose father left when he was three and a half years old, expressed freely in play and in fantasy his unconscious gratification over the relief that the father, the rival, had disappeared. While his mother and older sister talked often and longingly about the absent father, the little boy, undismayed, acted out and expressed his death wishes without restraint. His father was overseas for three years; naturally, the intensity of these fantasies subsided and the father did not exist again in his reality until the emotions of the family were stirred up by anticipation of his return. The little boy awaited the father's return with great anxiety. For him it was as though he was coming back from the death which he had wished so often with guilty conscience—and forgotten. After his father returned, the boy, now nearly seven years old, withdrew from him for a long time; he was an active little boy, whose masculine, assertive tendencies had had occasion to be stimulated, he found outlets in school and in the yard, but mostly in the yards of neighbors, since he avoided his father shyly.

Even these few, sketchy examples make it apparent that growing up in war has lasting effects upon the personality development of children, that the child's emotional adjustment to the father often will not be a smooth process.¹ We will investi-

¹ *Growing Up in a World at War*, Institute for Psychoanalysis, Chicago, 1942.

gate this now from the point of view of the returning veteran-father.



During the time of separation mother and child were having a real, even an intensified, relationship. For the wife, motherhood was a reality which for a time could encompass her passion; the child, its security ensured by the mother, did not need and did not miss the father except for the evolution of his psychosexual growth—and of this he was mostly unaware. The father, on the contrary, did not have immediate and real gratification either through his wife or in his parenthood. He knew that at some time a child was born to him, that some thousands of miles away there is a child or children of his creation, but all this was not quite real. Fatherhood, its gratifications and responsibilities, existed only in his fantasy. It remained an idea, almost an ideology, the manifestation of his will for survival, the means of expressing love and tenderness, expressions so necessary to him in his state of emotional deprivation and depletion. So the pride in fatherhood and the tender love for the child had to be fostered, and it was, in his fantasy, in letters, and in the friendly exchange between soldiers.

Is this enough to compensate for the gratification and responsibility inherent in the real experience, whereby the father usually grows into the role of his fatherhood? We have described in detail the unfolding of motherly feelings during pregnancy, the normal participation of the husband in building up the psychodynamic unit of mother, father, and child, and the fantasy construction of the triangle, which begins already during the pregnancy. Can all this be experienced from a distance, through letters alone?

Even if the father is present, he is excluded from the experience of pregnancy. His wife can convey to him her own emotional experiences only to a slight degree. And even this may be inhibited and disturbed by her or his shyness and defensiveness over the enigma of motherhood. When he is away, this part of the common experience can be filled in fantasy. His wife, eager to create emotional ties between him and their ex-

pected child, is often freer in her letters than she would be otherwise. His defensiveness against the bodily changes in his wife also diminishes or disappears entirely with the distance between them—thus he, too, can give free play to all his idealization.

The well-integrated personality accepts fatherhood, its gratifications and responsibilities, as a fulfilment of conscious ambitions and deeply ingrained desires. His pride is satisfied; he may project his hopes and expectations upon the child; his identification with his father is achieved; he no longer doubts that he will do better or at least as well as his father. If he was in danger, his ego's gain is great; he feels that he has been rescued, because he really had something to live for. He is grateful to his wife for having done all this for him. This is the emotional manifestation of the identification with his wife, and through this his marriage receives a deeper meaning. Under such conditions the father is able to sustain the relationship to the child. Though he has not seen his child, he believes, he is confident that he will recognize him as a part of himself when he returns.

However, many men cannot create a relationship with the infant, in fact with anybody, without contact, without visual and tactile reality. We have read and know of those who abandoned wife and child, who went into new marriages without waiting for the formality of divorce or confirmation of death. It was as if they had forgotten all obligations. In many instances this was true; they really did "forget"—not in the sense of pathological amnesia but in the sense that wife and child ceased to be an emotional reality for them. For people who are "primitive" or "infantile" as measured by the standards of ego-integration, a wife, a child whom one does not take in one's arms, whom one does not see and hear, for whom one does not do chores, fades out of the emotional life. What one cannot love and does not need to be angry about, ceases to exist. So they forget.

Others, undisturbed by the ambivalence of reality, create a fantasy ideal, an image of fatherhood. They believe that they love their family. However, they may love only the idea of fatherhood, the hope of going home and being what they want to be. Often when such men return they find, to their great disappointment, that they feel very little or nothing at all for the

child; the child is a stranger, a nuisance, perhaps even an intruder in his reunion with the wife. They do not know that fatherhood has to be learned and practiced. They cannot appreciate the fact that they missed an important part of the psychological experience of fatherhood; that not only does the child have to become acquainted with him, but—even more—that he, the father, must learn to transfer the idea of being a father to the everyday reality of living with a child. Many veterans feel guilty about this lack of feeling, and the guilt, which seems to add another milestone to the demonstration of their inability to love, becomes an important factor in their depression. Here again, it will depend upon the wife, upon her love for him, to give him emotional security. Only if he can become secure and self-assured in relation to her can he also learn to be a father and assume responsibility for his child. There are many men who, while repressing their own guilt, seek for a scapegoat and blame the wife or even the child for their own emotional emptiness; they nag at the child, criticize the wife, or both.

In many instances the veteran will blame his wife as the sole and main reason for his inability to accept his child. It is not unusual that infantile or dependent men marry women of similar or even weaker character. They usually married women who could not sustain their loyalty during the separation from their husbands, who felt burdened and bored by the child and often neglected it. Thus the veteran, disappointed in his wife, becomes unable to love his child who has been rendered unlovable by the unloving mother; hence the father is unwilling to assume responsibility for the child. Thus it happens often that men, who were so eager for love and to love, who, while overseas, could not remain unmoved by any child however sullen and hostile, once they are home again, cannot give to their own children and avoid their obligations.

In evaluating this phenomenon, we must recall that the father's relationship to his child is only one aspect of the total problem of the veteran's readjustment. While away, his fatherhood was a separate, almost sacred unit in his fantasy. He imagined his child as a part of himself and of his wife; he visioned what he would do for it in the way of pleasure, play, and work.

Upon his return, he realizes for the first time, and abruptly, that this relationship depends on so many other factors, preeminently on his wife's love for him or on his own sense of security as the head of the family. While in his fantasy, he could and can always love the child, in the reality whatever irritates him, whatever makes him feel weak, alienates him from the child. This is especially apt to occur in war marriages, in situations in which the husband left before his emotional relationship could be established with his wife. All the ambivalence, friction and hostility which necessarily will come up between husband and wife will significantly influence the father's relationship to the child.

One might assume that the veteran, during the period of his insecurity, would feel more secure with his child than with anyone else. Sometimes, superficial signs indicate that this may be true. However, closer investigation may prove this assumption false. Strength is the essence of fatherhood. If his child or children can give the veteran the sense of his own strength as an individual, then they actually help him by their very existence. Yet, it may be that the veteran, especially if he is really depressed, if he is wounded emotionally or physically, cannot feel such strength; he may feel the child's expectation as a demand, as an insistence that he should assume the fatherly masculine role: all this he cannot do since he feels so incapable. Thus he feels that his children are exposing his weakness and he becomes very much irritated by them; often, he cannot even face them. Our experience has been that this may occur not only in those instances in which the father feels unloved or even betrayed by his wife and therefore can feel justified in his lack of love and responsibility for the children. It happens also in those marriages in which the wife became strong and independent. She loved her child but isolated him from the father; he, feeling insecure and inferior in this relationship to his wife, could not emotionally assume the role of the father toward his child.

There is no doubt that the wife's attitude plays a prominent role in the father's readjustment to his children. Children who were already somewhat older when the father left will respond to him, each in his own way, determined by their previous development. (We refer here to children in the post-oedipal phases

or latency period and pre-adolescent.) Fathers may be surprised by the growth and development of their children. It is not so much a matter of the inches that the son and daughter grew, but rather more a matter of the emotional and intellectual growth in which the father did not participate. In the same way, the father is a deep surprise to the children. For years he was a fantasy. For years he was a hero whom one could admire and did not need to fear. When he descends from this pedestal to the level of everyday living, he cannot measure up to expectation—far from it. Perhaps sensing this is the main reason for his irritability and insecurity with his children; he may be afraid of them, of their criticism and their demands, and of the realization of his own shortcomings. He may feel emotionally more helpless toward the children when he feels that he has little to give them. He feels this way toward his wife, too, but in her case he has the means of convincing and winning her—he can give her sexual and emotional gratification. Not so with his children; their emotional equilibrium was interrupted when he left. Yet they overcame it. They were young and they grew as plants grow, by overcoming obstacles. They grew in a new or somewhat different direction from that in which they would have grown had the father been able to participate in their sphere of identifications and had not receded from reality to fantasy.

We have already pointed out how the lack of competition in reality with the father may influence the growth of boys and girls. Yet they became adapted to this. When the father returns, their emotional balance is disturbed again. The children feel that they must accept and deal with him. He came and took the mother, thus displacing the son as well as disappointing the daughter. He cannot easily reimburse his children, especially when they are no longer little children. The father can gain the little child's fantasy, he can satisfy his needs for play and through this the emotional relationship can be reestablished. He cannot do this so readily with the older children whose interests and attention are not as easily captured. Under normal conditions, he would have played an important part in their ego-development. This, however, for many years progressed without his presence and the children resent his right and au-

thority to assume his role again. Thus the new relationship will not be without conflict. Many mothers report, however, that there is little conflict between the returned father and the pre-adolescent—adolescent children. Closer investigation reveals that the friction is expressed in a negative way. In the reality the father is not what the children imagined him to be. He is not spontaneous in his attitude, and the children as well as the father are aware of this; thus they may shyly avoid each other.

The emotional readjustment between children of pre-adolescent age and their father begins with the little things in everyday life that have to be done. Although sharing in the day's routine may involve little direct emotional contact, this very fact may enable both children and father to come closer to each other. If the situation is fortunate, the relationship will increase in its emotional depth. In many cases, however, the contacts between father and children continue to be loose and superficial. The basis of his internal authority may be shattered; or his authority may be expressed too emphatically in the conventions of patriarchal fatherhood—which usually does not help. The children, having already grown in independence, do not feel that they have to give up any of their gains. They continue to grow away from their father and this is manifested in the acceleration of adolescence.



Too little time has elapsed since demobilization on a grand scale started to permit conclusive statements about the trends in the relationship between veteran-father and children. Within the family, the father's return demands a redistribution of emotional energies and the children are participants in this process. If the children are young, and here we refer to children under school age, their development is almost exclusively determined by the emotional relationships within the family. The parents' readjustment to each other and their relationship to the child defines the child's emotional life. As the child becomes older, life outside the family, the school and the community gains in significance year after year. With the fathers away and other influences loosening the structure of the family, the pre-adolescent

is not free from the pressures of war-time. Thus at the end of the war we see them eagerly taking the staff from those who, after a tumultuous adolescence, already have to face the serious problems of a post-war world.

PART IV

MEN, WOMEN: THE CHANGING
SEXUAL MORES

Chapter 17

ADOLESCENTS IN WAR-TIME

We have presented the psychosexual development from infancy to adolescence, and have shown that this perplexing period between childhood and maturity decides the individual's capacity for and attitudes toward love. At puberty, the unfolding sexuality is confronted with restrictions and prohibitions, as well as with permissions and gratifications incorporated in the emotional structure of the personality since early childhood. The conscience, as the intrapsychic representation of all environmental effects, is responsible for the insecurity and confusion, for the longing and suspense, for the mistrust, shyness and defiance so characteristic of adolescence. In these attitudes becomes manifest a struggle which is fought not only between the adolescent and his adult environment, between him and his contemporaries of the other sex, but also and primarily within himself. If, and only after, he has satisfied the various demands within his own personality can he achieve a solution which leads to love and through this to emotional maturation.

Thinking of our present-day youth, many educators may sigh and wish that love would go through the passage of conscience before it reaches volition. It is true that actions in the name of love are often so impulsive that one may doubt the role which we ascribed to the conscience in love. Therefore we repeat here what we emphasized through all our discussions, that *love—passionate erotic love—is not a function of sexual physiology alone*. It is an achievement of the total personality, sent off, started off by the impulse of the function of sexual glands.

Sexuality, and the emotional tension accompanying it, may be relieved in many ways. Adolescents, surprised by and exposed to the manifestations of their sexual glands, are often amazed and scared; they may attempt to regard it as a strange and un-

desired phenomenon, and not a part of themselves. Only slowly do they learn to connect with sexuality the sense of suspense, their longing, their all-pervading desire to be accepted by a person of their own and then by a person of the other sex. This acceptance by the ideal person is a reassurance of one's personality and a confirmation of one's value, which the individual gains through romantic love. The joy, elation, ecstasy, is not the result of the release of physiological tension alone, but is achieved by the resolution of the conflict within the personality; through love, sexuality becomes justified and acceptable; the individual becomes certain of his self-esteem, of his self-respect, more than before.

Yet, while we speak about love in these exalted terms, we may be asked whether we assume that a puritanically strict conscience is the *sine qua non* of love. We postpone the answer to this question until after we have investigated the psychological and cultural factors responsible for the changing attitude between the sexes. Will our observations of an impatient and accelerated maturation, of quickly changing love-objects, hasty marriages and divorces, prove us wrong?



Sexual mores, which prescribe the behavior between the sexes, differ in the various cultures. In our Western civilization, which is based on the ethical principles of Christianity, they vary from country to country, and in the same country from one historical period to another and from one generation to another. The contrast between "sexual license" of the Restoration period, for example, and the "sexual morality" of the Victorian age is quite marked. But we need not go back over the centuries. In our own century, which has suffered from two great wars, the modifications in sexual mores are even more marked, more widespread, more undefined than ever before.

Adolescents are too young to be held responsible for the variances in their behavior from one generation to another. Yet they, representing the effects of their education as well as their rebellion against it, *bear the brunt and display the trend in the changing sexual mores in an undisguised fashion.* There are

many reasons, rooted in the psychosexual structure of adolescence itself, that explain the frankness of adolescent behavior, its tendency to spread in mass-behavior, thus carrying the seed of further cultural change.

Adolescence is the age of contradiction in its external manifestations as well as in its internal structure. At a time when boys and girls wish and seem to be outgrowing the influence of the home and want to maintain their individuality against it, or even against all authority, they are actually too weak to stand alone. Yet they may be hiding this under the screen of seeming independence which they may at least partially achieve through work. At the same time, even though they cannot admit it, their earned independence serves to mask their insecurity and to help them avoid situations in which their spurious maturity might be challenged.

At a time when boys and girls believe that they know what is "proper" in relation to adults, they realize an utter confusion if called upon to decide the "acceptable" in their behavior toward contemporaries of the other sex. At the same time they feel that there is no time for trials, since they cannot risk errors. Sensitive as the adolescent is, he would rather assume an attitude of indifference and diffidence than face exposure to ridicule. And he knows that he would be ridiculed, since one of the defensive armors of adolescence is cruelty in ridicule. The Scylla and Charybdis of the faux pas in adolescent society can only be avoided by imitation of contemporaries. When one has no way of knowing what is right and what is wrong, "proper" will be what everybody of one's own age or group does. Only under this cloak of conformity can the adolescent feel that he is accepted; only if he is certain of his place in the group can he afford to be competitive and to strive for success within the group.

The *need for conformity*, for mergence of oneself in the group-behavior and in the group spirit, has always been a characteristic of adolescence. Adolescents dressed according to the dictates of customs handed down through centuries. They played games according to age-old rules and danced traditionally arranged dances, whether it was the polka, the minuet, the waltz, or the two-step or Scotch Highlander jig. Yet there is a differ-

ence between this type of standardization and the conformity of the present-day youth. The former was prescribed by the elders, and enforced by tradition. The adolescent was given no choice. Having reached the age of the pubertal rite—whatever this was in a given society, be it primitive and strict or mild and superficial (such as merely a change in the length of the trousers or “wearing the hair up”)—the adolescent was trained to accept a restrained adulthood. He had no choice of love-object and his marriage was also dictated within the family and supported by tradition. In our present-day society, adolescents, boys and girls alike, have to use their adaptation to proper group behavior for the purpose of competition for “popularity” and not for settling down. To achieve popularity in the group is the “proper” thing, the ideal success of “teen-age.” This success is sought just as ardently, its failure apprehended with the same vigor as any success or any failure can be judged in our society. Thus the teen-age takes the responsibility of individual freedom, for which it is not ready. While it loudly advertises its independence, it cannot do better than to hide its insecurity and fear in imitation and in group behavior.

Our civilization offers abundant help to this end. Movies and radio create common and easily interchangeable fantasies; they can be talked about openly, frankly, objectively. They blanket the individual's emotional involvement, which is further camouflaged by a special teen-age language which spreads quickly; it is so useful in hiding feelings. Thus the tendency toward standardization of the adolescent behavior, motivated by the psychological need of the adolescent on the one hand and by the emotional and economic needs of adults, never was so mechanized and so quickly interchangeable; it never carried so much the tint of independence as it does in our present civilization.

War found the adolescents in this state of sham independence and did much to increase both the independence on the one hand and the insecurity and fear on the other. While it increased the conflict of each adolescent individually, it gave him further means of independence, of free movement, and of increased earning capacity. The external freedom helped to cover up the conflicts and seduced the adolescents into believing in an internal

freedom, which they did not possess, it misled them to a sexual freedom for which they did not have the maturity. Adolescents, since their behavior was so manifestly affected by the war, give us the opportunity to study the factors which motivate the changing attitudes between the sexes.

The Boys

The economic changes created by the war and the realization of the fact that they were growing up to go to war, were two main factors affecting the boys' development during war.

Since eighteen-year-olds have to go into the Service, the next lower age must think in terms of Service too. When we realize that those who were fourteen and fifteen years old before Pearl Harbor were in the fighting lines before the war suddenly ended, we agree that the boys' restlessness, insecurity, fear, and the tendency to hide these feelings were justified. Impermanence endangers the adolescent because he will not admit that he needs security even to be able to fantasy about adventures. When danger becomes not a free choice, but a compelling reality, the boys become confused in their purposes. Knowing that Army life and war will change the course of their future, and probably their entire life, they cannot decide where to turn their efforts: toward obtaining security, the need for which they try to deny, or toward the heroic life of war, which they necessarily fear as well as desire.

During the years when a successful end of the war appeared to be in the unforeseeable future, boys pondered about these problems. Their decisions were necessarily tentative and changed with their moods as well as with the reality. They accepted the new responsibilities of preparing for their job ahead; working strenuously, they found gratification in a new and powerful sense of self-importance. Many of the boys, having thus grown into responsibility, did good work in taking advantage of the possibilities and demands which the war offered. They worked besides going to school, participated in earning the family living, and prepared themselves for the time when they would enter the Army. Others, whose life was planned on the basis of school

achievement, wanted to study. They asked for summer courses, striving to get more and more credit in before their education should be interrupted by induction into the Army. They were worried that the war might interfere with their ambitions and hopes for an indefinite time. They prepared themselves not for the war, but for their post-war careers, hoping that they would not lose so much time through the war if they used the time before induction to advantage. Others again had the attitude, "What is the use of school when we have to go to war as soon as we graduate?" They doubted the wisdom of the authorities who advised them to hold on to their usual way of living as long as they could. In their desire to grow up quickly, the boys felt that school was a waste of time and that action was what the hour demanded of them as well as of adults.

Some of the boys had their ample share of premature independence. They shouldered responsibilities—they became substitutes for those who had left. This may be healthy for the maturation of the boy as long as the task is not too heavy, and if it is not too burdensome emotionally. We observed family situations in which the mother, in her great dependence, expected the adolescent son at home to take responsibility for her. The "good boy," perhaps to atone for the unconscious guilt over his death-wish toward the older brother in war, became the whole support of the mother. Such an obligation, if accepted at an early age, may tie the boy to the mother unconsciously. Thus instead of being independent, he becomes dependent upon the mother and anxious to fulfil her demands. The emotional conflict between the sham independence and the basic dependence is one of the motives which, finally, may drive the adolescent into rebellion against the adult.

Mistrust toward adults and pessimism belong to the psychology of the adolescent. War necessarily increased these feelings since the adolescent faced the inability of the adults to provide a stable world, at least a stable home. The fear of being taken from the security of the family into the Army, from the friendly confines of the school into the cruelty of combat, transforms in many instances the adolescent pessimism into actual depression. Many boys were saved from such depression by group or by

gang activities. The group activities of the Boy Scouts, their pride in their achievements which helped the war effort, satisfied many boys and gave them self-reliance. For boys with greater need for rebellion, such socially accepted group activity was not enough. Their repressed dependence on their families and their repressed fear drove them to more impressive self-assertion. Thus they banded together in rebellious group formations. Wearing the "zoot suit" spread rapidly without any formal organization. When authority offers but little security and but little opportunity to escape its rigors, a dynamic necessity forces the youth to express its revolt; it finds courage and protection in the identification with many equals within the group. Such groups, with all their "terrific" initiations, usually soon outgrow their usefulness for individuals when they find gratification in useful activities. Only the most conflictful and unmanageable boys change from one group to another and finally get into trouble through asocial behavior.

It is a fact that adolescent delinquency and even criminal behavior increased during the war and even more so after. Criminologists agree that the youth of today has shown "acceleration in its maturity." Burglaries and robberies, crimes usually committed by men over eighteen years old, were practiced during the war by boys of seventeen and sixteen years of age. Many of them did not have any plan for the future and they lived as if life would end when they became eighteen and subject to draft. Thus, they felt that they must seize upon all that life has to offer before they leave. Aggressive, asocial action and sexuality represented adulthood for them—so they were out to indulge in both.

Judge J. N. Braude of the Boys' Court of Chicago analyzed the motives for criminal behavior in those boys whom he met in such great numbers in his court. Some of them earn much money, which gives them an independence they are not able to use wisely. Living in the fear that "everything will be over soon," they want to have fun, and finally they get into trouble. Others, envying those who have money, try to get it by all sorts of means. Afraid of authority altogether, they actually play the civilian and Army authorities against each other. They think

that they can "get off" with everything except murder because of their youth, or because the judge realizes that they soon will be going into the Army. Others, notwithstanding their aggressive behavior, are more afraid of the Army than of jail or the reformatory, and through crime actually achieve their unconscious need for protection.

Some of the boys, when they realize how far downhill they have fallen, suddenly become sobered, become free from confusion and reinstate their conscience and return to good behavior. Others remain the prey of their conflicts. Many parents and educators believe that the Army, with its routine and equalizing discipline, is the best solution for those boys who could not stay on a straight path when surrounded by the many good and bad opportunities of civilian life. For a relatively few, this idea proved to be right; for a much larger number, the Army life just sharpened the emotional conflicts which motivate criminal behavior. Even if they succeeded in superficially adjusting to Army life, they may return carrying with them their disappointment and bitterness against a society which never—not before, during, or even after the war—offered security. These aberrations of the ego development, as well as other effects of the accelerated tempo of war-time living are not independent of but rather they are dynamically interrelated with the psychosexual development of the boys. The latter appears in a sharper profile in the development of girls

The Girls

We recall here our discussion of the differences between the sexes in their psychosexual development. Boys, encouraged to live up to masculine ideals, prepare for their manhood consciously from early childhood on. If their development is normal, it is an uninterrupted process. In our culture, boys consciously want to be boys in order to become men. In contrast, to girls the role of womanhood appears dangerous and unwanted. Its erotic aspects may threaten their satisfying dependent relationship with the mother; identification with the mother means in many instances suffering and even degradation. Thus

girls, for social and for biologically rooted reasons, seem to defend themselves against womanhood.

How is it that despite this internal defensiveness, the girls' emotional maturation appears to occur at an earlier age than the boys'? This may be biologically determined, but it may also be that what seems to be the girls' sexual awakening is not a measure of real psychosexual maturation, but rather an obstacle to it. It would conform with the basic concepts of Freud to interpret the restless behavior of the girls as an expression of the protest against their biological inferiority.¹ While the boy, more self-assured and socially more accepted, can wait in repose and can collect his strength to approach his sexual opponent, the girl, insecure and dissatisfied, asks for attention, and especially for the attention of boys whom she, at the age of puberty, may envy.

A little girl of about nine years of age watched a boy from a distance, in the lobby of a summer hotel. The boy, probably ten or eleven years old, was playing cards alone. He was quite absorbed in his game and did not notice the girl who sneaked close to him and hit him suddenly and with force on his head. She challenged his attention in a way which we call "boyish." After she hit him, she did not run away as she would have if this action were the result of some feud. She stood there waiting with a coy smile, expressing mixed emotions: curiosity and a sense of expectation, covered by an expression of success. The boy looked up from his card game with surprise and anger. He recognized the girl standing halfway behind him. His facial expression revealed that he realized that it was a girl who had disturbed him. With a gesture which would have been annihilating to an older girl, he uttered, "Oh—You!", with all the disdain he could put in his voice, and turned back to continue his game. This scene reveals the nature of the conflict between girls and boys at the age of prepuberty. The girl wants the attention of the boy, but the boy, usually of the same age or only a little older, is not interested. Even if he knows what the girl wants, he is not yet ready to respond to her wish.

From an early age on, the boys and girls struggle with their

¹ Sigmund Freud, "Concerning the Sexuality of Women," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, I:191, 1932.

developing sexual awareness in daily contact with one another. In school, boys and girls fight against the realization of their internal impulses as well as against the external dangers which sexuality represents in specific ways; and the disparity in the emotional maturation between the sexes clashes in various conflicts and affects their intellectual as well as their emotional development. This is mainly the age in which the different tempos of maturation, or better, the different manifestations of the emotional needs have the greatest significance. While the boy, still preparing himself for his later masculinity, concentrates on his fantasies and on his friendships with boys, the girl is already in need of reassurance from him and craves his attention.

There was a time when "Sleeping Beauty" represented not only a fairy tale but the concept and code of the sexual approach between the sexes. She slept for a hundred years; that is, she slept until the prince came to awaken her. Folklore as well as individual artistic creation has never become tired of depicting the various ways of achieving love, and fantasy seems inexhaustible in creating obstacles to be overcome until the lover reaches the girl to awaken her to never-ending happiness. In these fantasies, which are just as attractive now as ever before, the overpowering masculinity is blended with tenacious purposefulness as well as with tenderness, thus promising the woman not only sexual gratification and security but also special appreciation of her self. These fantasies, collectively or individually, express the universal awareness that the girl, since her sexual desires are repressed, can become ready for her sexual function only after she has been awakened to it by love, by the great experience which gives her permission to abandon her sexual inhibitions. According to this concept, the man developed a strong sexual urge which compelled him to select the woman, to find her, and become her teacher in love. Girls still have the same fantasies; their dreams remain the same. However, they cannot trust them; they do not permit themselves to wait until their prince comes to awaken them. From early girlhood on, they are active in pursuing the attention of boys.

Our educational system permits the girls to take the lead in overcoming the boys' defensive armor. Before the boys are

ready for heterosexuality, the girls are encouraged to court the boys. Heterosexual desire plays but a small role in the motivation of this competitive game between the girls. The goal is to enhance the girl's security for her later "struggle for life," for the selection of a suitable husband. For this purpose she has to defeat her competitors. It starts in the upper grades and continues in high school. Thus it is experienced by all girls. Their emotional and intellectual life is influenced by it. There are the courageous and attractive ones, those who "can do everything" with the boys; and there are the many who envy the attractive girls and attempt to adjust to the idea that they will have to be satisfied with "second-best." Again there are those who cannot live up to the competition; they feel lost and inferior and have little hope for the future. And through all this worry and insecurity they become early aware of what the boys like and what they dislike. In the initial phases, during prepuberty, the girl, although she already desires attention, has a relationship with the boy purely on the basis of competition, on the level of puerile identification. However, through the adolescent years of high school age this changes. The girl, as she becomes aware of her femininity, desires the fantasy of feminine fulfilment which is dependent upon the stronger man. Thus she begins to mould her ego to suit the boys.

Boys, in the meantime also awakened to their masculine role, want to have the girls as representative of a "weaker sex." The boys proudly or surreptitiously let the girls know that they do not like "intellectuals." Thus the girls begin to hide their interest in their studies; they become afraid that good marks will not come in good stead with them, that they even endanger their social status, which depends not upon their scholastic achievement but upon their "popularity," upon the number of dates they have with the boys.

Thus a paradox develops. We send the girls to school to give them equal opportunity with the boys in education. As long as the girls' emotional lives are motivated by competition with the boys, that is, during the bisexual phase of prepuberty, the girls take and use the opportunity. However, during the adolescent years when they prepare for their sexual role, they turn against

intellectual opportunity and even depreciate it. Apparently co-education has many pitfalls for adolescents. The modern high school girl, after she becomes so early aware of the other sex, cannot withdraw, cannot become a woman passively waiting to be awakened by her prince. Impatiently she learns a technique to select and to be selected by boys, usually of her own age or only a little older. In this bisexual and competitive relationship, the girl learns to use the superficial attitudes of femininity in a sober, purposeful way. She becomes efficient in attracting boys. This gives a sportive quality to the relationship between the sexes at this age level. A young girl, attractive, efficient, and well protected in a family of high social standing, was told half-reproachfully by an old friend of the family, "Nancy, you have become a flirt." She answered promptly, "Doctor, you don't give me credit for learning it. I was not born with it." This statement, witty in its directness, correctly states the facts. The young girl, aware of the keen competition, cannot rely on her innate charm alone. She practices her skills; what was originally learned to enhance her loveliness for her own sake becomes an instrument probed for its effectiveness.

Movies help her in this. It was interesting to observe how adolescent girls responded to Lauren Bacall in "To Have and Have Not." They were fascinated by this girl who maintained such independent attitudes, who played with a man on equal terms, and with a man's techniques until she finally surrendered to him. Or did she surrender? No. Discerning the man's interest in her, she accepts him as the "right man," as "her man," and goes away with him. Love itself remained unspoken, to be filled in by the fantasy of the audience. Hollywood succeeded in portraying on the screen the collective ideal of the new girl-generation. She is active, discerning, knows what she wants and what the man wants, and still remains a "good girl." This girl-ideal, somewhat of a cross between the tragic aloofness of the Greta Garbo type and the promiscuously intriguing Marlene Dietrich roles, represents the modern girls' goal: *to be accepted on equal terms with men*. Yet at the same time all the girls realize that "Slim" had to travel around the world in order to

create for herself an exceptional situation where she could meet her man.

For beyond all the self-assured awareness of the modern young girl is the realization of the great scarcity of boys, and this increases the boys' value and puts the girl in second place in the market of sexual relations. Thus the girls, afraid of competition and of failure, court the boys and offer them erotic excitement. The boys do not need to wait and suffer for long the pain of adolescent suspense and doubt. They are reassured before they need reassurance, before they are emotionally ready for love. The girls thus lend the boys a false prestige, a false superiority, and a false sense of masculinity. For the boys did not need to grow mature through the efforts which love demands. This, however, changes the relationship between the sexes—the social mores—and not only in a superficial manner. It depreciates the girl, who should be a goal and ideal to attain, to a mere object of erotic play, and thus it impedes the completion of psychosexual maturation. Adolescents of both sexes remain fixated in an emotional immaturity which is characterized by bisexual tendencies. While such an emotional state tends to achieve satisfaction for immediate needs without delay, it harbors the unhappiness which results from a devaluation of love.



The shift between the basic emotional attitudes regulating the psychosexual approach between the sexes developed slowly. It always received compelling stimulation during wars. However great the girls' desire to become equal with and independent of boys, it is not their desire alone which is responsible for an aggravated *masculinization* during war-time. In war, more than at any other times, girls live in an atmosphere in which the boys are more important and receive more attention. This is especially true in families where one or more members are actively engaged in the war. A young girl, listening to her mother's worries about her father and two brothers who were all in the Service on active combatant duty, finally interrupted her mother, asking, "Do you worry about me sometimes too?" Many young girls, resentful of the mother's attention for the

brothers, do not get any reassurance, however hard they strive for it. Thus their old, forgotten rivalry with their brothers is reawakened. While their increased dependence is rejected by the preoccupied mother, they may choose between various solutions for their conflicts.

Some of the girls, as they become aware of their fears and their increased dependence, enjoy the feeling that war offers the advantage of safety to them. To satisfy their dependence and in order not to become too guilty, these girls feel obliged to stay more closely at home. They often take on greater responsibility and they are the "good girls" until they come to recognize that they are getting out of contact with other girls—and with boys. This may embitter them and prepare them for the rebellion against mother and family. Probably this emotional constellation is the most common precipitating factor in the "premature growing up" of girls in war-time. Other girls respond differently in the same situation. Perhaps because they are more shy with boys, they cling to the home and act helpless, as though afraid of growing up. Envious of the more courageous and successful girls, they become hostile toward girls as well as toward boys. Other girls, either because of their identification with their mother and/or much more often, because of their identification with the boys, understand and even overestimate the need for comfort and consolation in boys who are about to face the hardships of war. They enlist for all sorts of activities which help the boys to have a good time. Serving in the U.S.O., and writing letters to the boys in Service were greatly stimulated and encouraged by adults who necessarily became worried later, when they realized that the girls' willingness to give the boys a good time was getting out of hand.



Much was written about the "bobby-soxers" who defy the curfew, whether it is parental or established by police order, who sit in drug-stores and stand around the corners with soldiers and sailors. Whether the girls are from the "big city" or from small towns and even farm communities, they flock close to Army camps and wait for their soldiers, or for any soldier. One knows

about the increase in venereal diseases, illegitimate pregnancies, hurried and immature marriages, yet it seems that there is very little that one can do. Looking for explanations, one blamed the war in a general way. One assumed that the mothers of these girls were busy with war work, that family supervision became lax, that many families became unstable, and that many girls lost their friends by moving to new cities. Such sociological factors as these were listed, and many others. Yet these seem to be merely superficial precipitating motivations. The adolescent girls are aware of the anxiousness of their older sisters; their own impatience for marriage was accentuated by physiological restlessness and they entered into competition with them at an earlier age than usual. Yet such motivations, important as they may be, do not expose the crux of the problem any more than does blaming the fashion which expresses the same imitative behavior. In a period when everybody wants to appear to be the same age, it is no wonder that the fourteen-year-old girls look like eighteen. This deprives them of the protection of youth which girls, even more than boys, try to discard like undesirable old clothes. The young girls want to be grown up in order not to be left out; they feel as if they would be forgotten by life if they did not take this chance, which in a nightmarish way appears to them as the last chance, although it is really the first one.

What do these adolescents want? Where do they get courage to carry their initial harmless flirtations away from the familiar grounds of school into the atmosphere of Army camps? How do these adolescents overcome their shyness? How and why do they suppress their fear?

Some of the girls really believed that it was their patriotic duty, that they thus participated in the war effort, that they helped to keep up morale. Others, more aware of their own motivations, admitted that they did not want to lose the chance of meeting and getting acquainted with boys. The fear of not being loved, of not being initiated into a mystery which they sensed in themselves and felt in every manifestation of the civilization, came over them like a fever. It increased the sexual tension and desire more than would have been adequate to their age, and to their sexual development in normal times. Thus they went out

"wolfing." How meaningful is this term, how much of the psychodynamics of behavior is expressed in one word! Originally, in the slang sense, a "wolf" was a man who went out, usually alone, to seduce girls. The girls should be aware and afraid of him. They should avoid him since the wolf had no good intentions toward little girls, as everyone knows from "Little Red Ridinghood." However, there is a known form of defense, psychologically as effective as it is in war tactics, which is defined as *identification with the aggressor*, i.e., one does, or tries to do, what one is afraid of having done to one's self. Thus the girls go out in small groups. The girl friends unite to go out together to "corner" the boys, to meet them. Just as boys form small or large groups or gangs to multiply their courage by identification when they are about to perform asocial acts, in much the same way, these girls protect each other by their identifying friendships. As their courage increases, their guilt feeling and individual responsibility diminishes. Thus, they may succeed in suppressing their fears of sexuality.

All this adds up to a sense of sexual freedom. The age-old envy of women for the sexual freedom permitted to men appears to be satisfied. The girls feel equal to their partners. Their equality, however, is merely the continuation of the prepubertal bisexuality which they indirectly admit when they pride themselves on "wolfing"—indeed, they find the young men in uniform only too ready to be swallowed; there is an insecurity of their present and a fear of the future which increase the sexual tension in young women and men alike. The feeling that they are "living on borrowed time" gives permission to any gratification they may want. In a mood of exaggerated expectation, they are ready to believe that "irresistible love" forces them together. Some of the girls get scared and withdraw. Others want to go the whole way. The fear and worry often come afterwards. Many girls, after they had their first intercourse, became alarmed. The sexual act often breaks down their sham independence and the attitude of not caring. The fear of the consequences, the ominous fear of sexuality, flares up often with neurotic intensity. Fear of being pregnant, of being ruined and sick causes acute panic which often develops into a chronic neu-

rosis. For, in the moment of sexual intercourse, the playful and premature relationship between the sexes (which can be almost a group activity) becomes a singular relationship between one man and one woman, for which they alone have to take the responsibility, and often it is the girl alone who takes the consequences.

This description characterizes the behavior of a part, and certainly a minority, of the total girl population. Why do we believe then that it has such a great importance for the shifting sexual mores of our society? As we pointed out, the fixation to a bisexual phase is the general motivation of the behavior of modern adolescents; this affects even the "good girls" who do not expose themselves to danger or are able to master it when it arises. These, too, are affected by the sexual freedom of the others. The good girls may feel superior. However, at the same time, they are jealous; even if they are not aware of it, they may envy the sexual freedom of the "wolfing girl." But even more they are afraid that the girls who act on their sexual freedom put them at a disadvantage when it comes to selecting and securing a husband. Thus the restlessness of the girls generally increases.



Adolescent girls were always concentrated upon themselves. Their interest in their appearance—whether it is expressed as self-admiration, self-improvement or dissatisfaction with themselves—is physiologically determined. When the first long dress meant initiation into womanhood, the girl succeeded in keeping every member of the family concerned with the event. Yet there was a great difference in the emotional atmosphere within the family toward the girl. She was the center of interest only in exceptional situations. At other times she was a subdued member of the family who was being prepared for her future role as wife and mother by learning to be modest, unobtrusive, helpful. It is not so now. Her future role is not so well-defined. Her mother, unsure of what will be the best for her daughter, changed her attitude. She became, instead of the authority who always knew right from wrong, the "older girl friend" who is often just as bewildered as her daughter. This change in the

mother's attitude toward her daughter is the result of a complex interaction of psychological and sociological factors which, during the last three or four generations, have loosened the ties of the patriarchal family.

Chapter 18

THE BACKGROUND OF THE WOMAN OF TODAY

In the patriarchal family, the role of the woman was well defined. Her place was in the home, her function was to rear children and to help her husband in achieving economic security. Her tasks were inseparably connected with her function as a sexual personality. Her place in the community, too, was defined by her marriage. She could have no more ambition for her own self than what was proper for women of her social standing. Church and charity were her social expressions. Besides this, she could extend her ambitions and desires to her children whose present and future were shaped by her ideals. The mother in the patriarchal family was a practical idealist.¹ Shut off from the world by the protection of her home, she gained her strict conscience through the self-restraint imposed upon her by her parents as well as by her marriage. Thus she lived in a world in which values were stable. Nothing appeared to her more justifiable than to hand them down unchanged to her children. Not so for the mothers today. Their values uncertain, the future of their children insecure, their position in the world no longer defined by their place in the home alone, these women struggle, within themselves as well as in their relationship to their children, for stabilization of their ideals—love and independence in work. *These two aspects of woman's life, her sexuality and her work, are so closely interwoven that the woman of today can only be understood by evaluating the interplay between her sexual role and her striving for independence in work.*

Women have always worked. They were the home-makers; they created the core of emotional security which assured stabi-

¹ Harvey O'Higgins: *The American Mind in Action*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1924.

lization of the mores from generation to generation. This was not only an emotional and ideological influence; it was the result of actual labor contributed in the household and in the various ways in which she helped her husband to achieve success. For her services, she was paid only indirectly by participating in her husband's success. If he were unsuccessful, her work went into the bottomless sea of his failures. In fact, the first women to leave their homes to earn a wage were recruited from among those whose husbands and fathers could not provide for the family. And thus their work, although it rescued the family from poverty, appeared to be a demonstration of the failure of their men, and accordingly was resented. There was another class of women workers recruited from among those who refused to be exploited by their families, who rebelled against an unrecognized cooperation with man. In this country, the New England school teacher made the start and in the European countries it was also the school teacher who was the first to begin the fight against man's supremacy. They were demonstrating individually that man was not necessary to their existence, since they were independent financially and had renounced him sexually. Thus the battle was fought on two fronts and these two fronts—work and love—still stand.

An analysis of the psychodynamic factors may reveal that individually the struggle started in the sexual sphere—in the sexual competition between man and woman. As a result, intellectual attainment and independence appeared incompatible with marriage. Such repression of the primary emotional desires of womanhood represented a revolutionary challenge and people resented it. Consequently the women of this avant-garde suffered from the ridicule of society as well as from their own conflicts and frustrations. For they only rarely could completely suppress and sublimate the desire for feminine success in marriage. Many women tried to combine their two ambitions, and probably even more women gave up their economic independence for the sake of marriage and motherhood—this, however, not without resentment. Their ideals represented new goals for the marriage; they strove for greater fulfilment in the relationship between husband and wife and they often felt disap-

pointment. Their skepticism toward man became frankly or covertly expressed within the marriage. Their doubting and critical attitude toward their husbands affected their children and helped to change the emotional concepts of the oncoming girl generation toward men and toward work. It did not leave the sons untouched either; they, too, had to adapt to a mother who was critical of men.



The first World War changed the woman's world in many ways; it did more for the equalization of the sexes than many preceding centuries altogether. Women's work was suddenly needed. It no longer implied either poverty, genteel or otherwise, or "screwy rebelliousness." It was work, socially and politically recognized. The woman achieved suffrage. World War I thus gave woman the symbols of equality—suffrage and social freedom. The women enjoyed their emancipation; short skirts, bobbed hair, drinking and smoking were the superficial gestures of this freedom. The mechanization of industry and household made work easier, the hours shorter, promising women to recast their life on the model of man's. The "wild twenties" represented a sort of naive abandon to this promise. Girls drank at bars and praised or even vaunted sexual freedom. Their mothers, using their newly won right, helped to enact prohibition; their idealistic desire to better the world clashed with the daughters' striving for sexual freedom. Many women sensing the conflict became afraid. Society did not seem to protect them against their own instincts. Thus sexuality was a greater danger than before.

As the post-war boom period changed into the economic depression, woman's situation changed again. The play-girl of the twenties became the serious, hard-working woman of the thirties. Women worked again for the economic security of the family. Their motivations to work in many respects were similar to those which women had in helping to sustain their families when the husband or father failed and was unable to provide. The greater versatility of woman's work, her ability to make work independent of mechanized industry, to earn her living by

tasks around the house, by individual services, etc., made her the provider at a time when the men in the family could not earn a living. This was a shock and surprise to the American women who were oriented toward success—toward the quick success of their men; they wanted equality on the basis that both women and men should have the same opportunity for success. The men, obviously dependent on jobs and industry, unable to create new wealth by attacking new frontiers, lost a great deal of prestige in the eyes of women. This drove the women into emotional conflict. Their equality in work and education appeared senseless because insecurity loomed everywhere. It became obvious that masculine equality was a sword with a double edge. It could be achieved by hard work—and if economic independence was achieved, it meant independence from men too, since there were fewer and fewer men who could offer a girl a greater security than she could earn for herself.

Equality, exposed with such brutality, was a threat to woman. She did not like herself as a dependent woman, waiting for the man to whom she did not dare trust her security; and she did not like herself as a striving individual competing with men and undermining her chances for emotional happiness. Thus, the woman doubted herself and became skeptical of her feminine and her masculine goals alike. There were only a few who trusted themselves to integrate both of these tendencies—the freedom to work and the freedom for motherhood—in a happy solution.

The doubts and the ambiguity of all values affecting the emotional life of women from childhood were already obvious in adolescence, during the high school years. Those girls whose homes could not offer security and who were pushed into wage earning were emotionally better off. They did not need to make a decision. They lived from week to week in the hope that external circumstances, the appearance of a suitable man, would solve their problem.

The girls in offices, stores, and in factories fantasy their future as depending on a man who is secure enough to offer them a home and liberate them from work. What they do for wage earning, they usually do half-heartedly, since work is subordi-

nated to the desire to be successful in marriage. They wait for the man whom they doubt; for they cannot be sure that he will be able to provide security in marriage. Whatever the conscious wishes of the women are, they cannot help but be affected by this uncertainty while they are working and waiting out of necessity. They suffer from their doubts and from the ambiguity of their emotional situation. It is hard to establish one's self-esteem if all values are doubted, when they are played against each other in ambiguous struggles. These doubts are not superficial or passing. They leave traces in the woman's personality which are only rarely erased when her desire is fulfilled and she is married. The complexity of her values about herself as well as about her husband necessarily extends even to her children. She no longer can hand down unified, unquestioned ideals to them and this influences the relationship between the mother and her children.



In a civilization in which hygiene is a semi-god and knowledge counts even more, the mothers are anxious to raise their children perfectly. Perfection in raising children in our times means to enable them to become stable individuals in an unstable world. This is indeed a formidable task; no wonder that it threatens the mother who, troubled by the ambiguity of her own values, cannot decide upon goals for her children. Should her daughter grow up to be an independent woman, or should she be dependent in her future upon the support of a man? Her son—should he, or will he be, a master, or will he be the passive follower of ideas set up by his mother? The insecurity and vacillation of the mother confuses her children. It conveys to them too many conflicting permissions. The children at an early age have to learn to choose among them, for any deviation causes the mother to fear that she or "the book" failed. This makes her sons as well as her daughters anxious. They may try to appease her by remaining dependent or they may grow away from her with much rebellion; only rarely do they succeed in this process without neurotic relapses.

The daughter, by the time she reaches adolescence, has al-

ready absorbed in her personality her mother's expressed and untold desire to reach a solution for her conflicts through the life of her daughter. The daughter at this age carries in herself—in her conscience—the mother's doubts about successful femininity and her mistrust and criticism of men. The daughter knows that she can do no more nor better than try to prepare herself for both roles, for marriage and for independence. Many of the girls can do this only in a half-hearted manner; if talented and resourceful, they may do it purposefully.

This is probably the clue to the indulgence of the mothers toward their adolescent daughters. The mothers, respecting the fact that their daughters will have to find their own solutions, do not dare interfere with their behavior. Knowing even more than the daughters do about the insecurities of a war-torn world, the mothers feel relieved from responsibility when they see the daughters acting in accord with the rules of a group created by the needs of adolescents who are facing identical problems in their education and in their futures. However "silly" this standardized behavior may appear, however exacting its demands on the family may be, it is tolerated readily for it has an important function: it carries the authority of the group back into the family. The support of the group counteracts the mother's doubts and thus helps the adolescent in making decisions. These decisions do not relate to the solution of external problems alone. They have to arbitrate between the conflicting values of feminine desires and masculine ambitions, and this task is all the more confusing since society cannot be relied upon to settle them through binding, stable traditions. Society presented equality of the sexes and left it to the individuals to decide how to use the gift.

The adolescents of yesterday—we mean those who were adolescent when this war began—tried to postpone their decision. The nightmare of the economic depression was partially responsible for this. When hope for success was not rosy, there was one more reason to delay the responsibility of choosing between conflicting ideals. This emotional situation provided our educational institutions, especially the colleges, with an abundance of students. Not only the adolescents, but their parents as well,

appreciated college education as a means of intellectual development in the belief that this is the best foundation of equality in work; at the same time, it also nourished the hope that decision would be made easy for the girl by providing her with a suitable husband.

It would be false to assume that this was the only, or even the main, motivation for the girls' desire for a college education. College served as a preparation for the future for men and women alike. During the college years, the identification with the man was revived on an intellectual level. In their psychosexual behavior, the students are individuals of the opposite sex seeking gratification in love; in their school work, they are classmates gaining an education. Whereas in high school the girls felt that their intellectual attainment had to be hidden from the boys, in college it is appreciated as an asset. In discussion groups and in individual exchange, young men and women strove to reach a clear concept of a confusing world. They criticized the adults because of the first World War—and even more so because they could not do better after the war. Finding a common basis in this, the young people tried to reevaluate their individual relationship to society. They wanted to clarify what they could expect from society and what society could expect from them.



The woman's preparation proceeded on two levels: she felt ready to compete with men and she was ready to rely on the power of her sex appeal. She proudly assumed that she "knows boys"; she had felt on equal terms with them since her pre-adolescence. She did not realize that this equality—her bisexuality—creates conflicts. In identifying with both boys and girls, she became competitive with both. She competed with boys on the intellectual level and at the same time, she was dependent upon them for approval of herself as a sexual individual. Thus she became overanxious in her competition with girls. And this tendency was becoming more and more marked during the war. She felt that she could not afford to wait and thus she married early and hastily since the early marriage gave her and her family and friends the proof that she—in spite of intellectual

aspirations, in spite of independence in work—did not deny her femininity. To be accused of being unfeminine, and therefore unsuccessful in competition with other girls for men, appeared to be worse than a hasty and probably unhappy marriage.

Not only the college girl but women of all spheres and circumstances were ready to face life with such dual preparation. They were wage-earners, or could become so. They were ready to work, not out of a sullen rebellion against their sex, but because it was now expected of them as a natural course of events.

Yet, beyond all this preparation, there was ever present in the mind of the woman a fear, the new fear of the joblessness of their men; this was the remnant of the depression. Many women felt deeply the harm done to their husbands; even if they could have enjoyed the self-reliance inherent in self-earned financial means, they could not do this undisturbed. The husband's emotional insecurity and depression made the woman recognize that she cannot gain when he loses; that many of her emotional needs remain unanswered if she, in spite of her independence, cannot rely on a strong and efficient man. When the second World War started, the women answered the call to work with this reservation in mind.

Chapter 19

WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES

It was not difficult to mobilize women for work. Women of every age and of all classes went to work. Working in factories and on the farms, even in offices, became glamorous. As was to be expected, work which had the most masculine qualities had the most romantic appeal. Women pilots, welders, and the girls in the airplane factories had a special prestige, while the white collar girls working long hours in government offices were easily forgotten or merely taken for granted. Work of the women is of interest to us here, not as an economic issue but as an emotional problem since it effects changes in their personalities which finally influence the relationship between men and women in general.

From all the varieties of women workers, we select for study the uniformed women in this war, the women in the several Auxiliary Services. They were soldiers, too; they left their homes to serve; some remained within continental United States, others were on faraway shores. Now they are returning. Their problems, their position in the community, their future may serve as an illustration of the deeply interpenetrating struggle between the sexes which still is being fought on both the economic and the emotional fronts.

In view of all the strivings of women for equality with men, in view of all their awareness of the urgency of the situation, it was surprising that enlistment into the Auxiliary Services went slowly. Billboards and newspaper articles, recruiting offices and radio propaganda invited women to enlist. Their dramatic appeal concentrated on making women realize that they were needed, that their participation would give expression to the all-pervading necessity of this war in which all humanity was involved and everything human was at stake. They appealed to

the women's motherliness and protectiveness, their wish to bring the men back home soon. Yet women appeared reluctant; the quotas were not filled. As late as the spring of 1945, for example, it appeared that it might be necessary to draft nurses since voluntary enlistment left the hospitals understaffed.

Recruiting officers for the WACS and the WAVES will be able to tell the tale of small-town families and how strongly they resisted the enlistment of their daughters. What was "proper" determined their attitude to a much greater degree than the need of the country. Families who gave up all their sons to the war found it improper and almost disgraceful that a daughter should be in the Service or even evince a desire to enlist. As if the degree of masculinity which is socially permissible must be scrupulously measured, girls also found enlistment "unfit." They responded to recruiting efforts with flippant answers: "I will be able to get a husband without going into the Army," or "It would look as if I wanted to wear pants all the time." Whatever the verbal rationalizations, the American families assumed that being in the Services meant imitation of man and proximity to uniformed men to such a degree that the morals of the girls would be endangered and they would develop unfeminine qualities.

Brothers, fiancés and husbands were definitely against the enlistment of their sisters, fiancées and wives. One man wrote to his fiancée who had asked for his consent to her enlistment:¹ "I want to feel when I see you and when I think of you that I am protecting something that would do a poor job of protecting itself and a uniform would destroy this effect immediately." In tender words this young man expressed his desire to be a hero for and to his fiancée. He expressed freely that his masculinity thrived on the idea of his right to protect the weaker sex. Keeping up this illusion was one of his personal war aims, something that made it "worth fighting for." This was especially important to the American soldier who had not actually experienced what war can do to his own home, to his own country. Yet he, too, could believe the necessity of the war and its reality only

¹ Mina Curtiss: *Letters Home*, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1944.

by relating it to his home. Other soldiers expressed with equal frankness their dependence upon an unchanged home while they are away, and therefore they wanted their wives or fiancées, their mothers and even sisters to remain home. One young husband told his wife who was going to enlist in the Red Cross: "Where should my thoughts go to find you? When I know where you are, I have a home wherever I should be." Women, responding to such requests, naturally would stay home. And if the wife did not comply with such a demand, the husband was justified in sensing in his wife's attitude a revolt, a tendency to loosen the relationship. No wonder that so many husbands answered, "You can have a divorce too." Other men, perhaps less able to express their opinion so definitely, just became depressed and resentful at the mere idea of their wives' enlisting.

In countries which were directly attacked, men and women faced a different situation. There, an overpowering necessity put the women to work and if their job required a uniform, the men accepted it as forced by a reality which did not permit individual choice. In America, the women keenly felt that to leave home at a time when the men, so acutely aware of their dependence, idealized home and women, would mean a challenge for which they would pay the penalty later. During the height of the recruiting campaign, many women expressed the opinion that the right of enlistment, while giving women the freedom of choice, put too much responsibility on them. They voiced the opinion that if women were needed they should be drafted. Draft, they pleaded, would make the woman's situation socially equal to that of the man's, and she could do her duty without fear of reproach.

The American soldier, generally speaking, rarely could attribute good intentions, acceptable moral principles, to a woman's enlistment. The war, he felt, is a dirty, disagreeable and unglamorous job—a man's job. While the going was very hard, before victories began to accumulate, the men soldiers felt even more sincerely that it was their job to finish it. They did not like it. But as long as they knew that they had to fight one battle after another, they felt as if they could do it only by having an antidote against the homelessness of war—their ideal-

ization of their home, their past and their future. This ideal was injured by the women who left home to enlist. The women who were not "made to do it," who left home of their own free will, offended somehow the soldier's cherished civilian self. The girl who wants to be in the Army does not appear to him as another hand who comes to help him finish the job quickly so that he can get home sooner; she appears to him as a fool, who wants to imitate something in him that he does not feel is admirable. Thus he is angry with the women in uniform and assumes that their real, even if not outspoken, motive for enlistment was a desire for "license to sexuality." For him, women in uniform ceased to be "good" in the usual sense of the word. The men feel that in donning a uniform she doffed a part of her womanhood, the part which they assume is the "ideal woman." What is left represents to the soldier "something in-between," namely, the depreciated woman. Needless to repeat, this assumption of the soldier was a result of his own emotional reasoning. Women who wanted promiscuity could have had it much more easily outside than under the regulations of Army life.

Many thousands did enlist in spite of opposition. What were their motivations?

Conscious and unconscious desires urged the woman to leave her civilian life for the Services. And it was the task of the psychiatrist to decide whether her motivations—purposeful and sincere, or groping and neurotic—would carry her through several years of service. For example, a young woman from Chicago's steel-mill district said, "I was behind the same machine for three years. I want my country to give me the same opportunities it gives the boys. I want to learn something in the Army." The desire to be the boys' equal and to be treated as such came undisguisedly to the fore. She, and many others, looked upon the Army in much the same way as did the Negro soldier (page 44) who wanted to be the best soldier in the Army of the United States because in it he found his first opportunity to be a part of a great organization and to get ahead. This girl certainly made a good WAC; the training and advancements were adequate gratifications for her. Other women had the training which they now offered to their country. For example, not only

one woman with long experience told and meant it sincerely: "Until now, I did this for a private firm; now I want to do it for my country."

Every woman had her own individual reasons for enlisting, and connected individual ambitions and hopes with this step. Many wanted to get away from an everyday life which did not promise much satisfaction. Many tried to escape lonesomeness after their husbands left for overseas, or, even more so, when they had been deserted for another woman. Some sought relief from the shock occasioned by the death of a child or of their mother or by bereavement due to the loss in line of duty of a son, husband or father. Still others sought escape from conflicts within the family or from their lack of success with people. Girls resented being the comfort and solace for the mother who was worrying about her son or sons; they enlisted to be on the same status with the boys, and at the same time to receive the attention of the mother. Thus they saved themselves from a confining life which they probably would have had to follow if they had remained at home. Underlying these motivations was the tendency for identification with the man which became stronger through separation; hence women, more than at any other time, were desirous of sharing the man's experiences or at least of having experiences similar to his. This basic identification was often rationalized—and often it was a valid rationalization—that "this way the time will go faster."

There were also, of course, girls with definitely pathological motivations. For example, one girl, wanting to enlist, explained with great pathos that nothing appealed to her more than death on a battlefield, or on a mined road, knowing that she had saved the life of another soldier. This morbid desire for identification with men made it not difficult to decide that the ecstatic desire to die would not make her a desirable WAC.

In general, we may say that women who enlisted in the Auxiliary Services had a desire for independence from family ties, and an ego which was willing and able to assume life in organized and controlled groups.

Once in the Army, the women were faced with the problems of emotional adjustment which were in some respects more difficult than those of the men. The men were in the Army because they were ordered to be there; the danger to their life and future was obvious to everybody. For this reason they could express their dependence, and could request attention and emotional help from their families and friends. They could voice their feelings about the disadvantages of Army life. But the girls in uniform were voluntarily in the Service, often against the wishes of their families. Yet they, as well as the men, felt lonesome and homesick. They missed their privacy and suffered from regimentation. They felt impelled, however, to hide these feelings since they did not dare to count on sympathy. The man's Army compelled the soldier to submerge his individuality for the sake of the task ahead; for this he gained compensation in the unity of the group, in its solidarity. In the woman's Army, there was no such compelling force—the possibilities of future dangers were understated and forgotten. There was no fear strong enough to force the women to submerge themselves in the group. Yet they could do but little with their individuality since they, too, had to follow regulations and orders—they also were in the Army.

In the women's Auxiliary Services, as in every Army, chance played a big role. There were many women who could find all the satisfaction of an important job well done; but there were others who had left important civilian jobs to do better for their country and found themselves doing jobs which their secretaries had done in civilian life. Many women had sought in the Service an opportunity to exercise talents which their civilian position probably did not permit; some succeeded, others—through no fault of their own—had to look on enviously while less capable individuals handled the task their hearts desired. The large mass of women in Service did the same sort of work they were accustomed to doing in civilian life, but under less satisfactory conditions. Yet, at least toward civilians, they felt compelled to "keep up a front," to appear satisfied and proud of their uniforms. Some understanding parents and friends tried to ease their conflicts between disappointment and self-reproach. How-

ever, their sympathy and their concern were more genuine for the men who might actually be in danger.

Thus many of the service women worked up a great desire for overseas service, especially as they witnessed more and more "alerts." They imagined themselves in dangerous adventures and in important jobs. They repressed their fear and the sense of dependence in order to justify the original step of enlistment to themselves, to the family back home, and to the soldiers leaving for embarkation as well. Those who did not succeed envied those who could relieve the boredom with new experiences. Often, however, they had to recognize the fear which created conflict when the orders actually came. Others strongly resisted the suggestion that they apply for overseas duty. As they suffered from the emergence of their individualities, they wanted more and more some guarantee of prestige, some compensation such as "bars" or "a special assignment." But the disposition of her services was no more up to the individual woman than it was up to the man. Often, even before the question of overseas service arose, the women suffered from the emotional strains of Army life.

It was not surprising that women sought to replenish their depleted egos in the one way left to them. Under the circumstances, their femininity became very important; they wanted to count as women. Many romances started in the Army and ended in marriage. They were not always impetuous, but often talked over with fellow service women and with a commanding officer. Some of these marriages have as good and even better chances as those war marriages which were based on short acquaintance and interrupted by long separation. These women, although they did not share the fighting, shared some part of Army life. They had "gripes" similar to those of the men; even more they counted on the similarity of their experiences to shape their future together.

Probably all the unmarried women had the idea of marriage in mind when they enlisted. If not so, their desire for marriage certainly increased while they were in the Services; for good reasons, since marriage would free them from individual problems which heavily burdened the service woman's mind. The

women in the Services early became aware and apprehensive of the civilians' attitude toward them. They anticipated that when the time came to live within the family again, they would be questioned and their experiences in the Army would be criticized. And there would be—so they feared—a reawakening of those conflicts which they wanted to escape in going into the Service. There would be the brothers and sisters whom one wanted to surpass through rapid advancement and in special assignments. If she succeeded externally, she probably could also achieve an internal goal of real emancipation from the family ties, however, if she was thwarted in her hopes, if it was shown that the brothers did better, or the sisters who stayed at home were "right," the fear of reckoning loomed in her mind. Thus she anxiously looked for the "right man," for the marriage which would settle her problems.

Whether they found the solution of their problems in marriage or not, they were lonely girls, away from home with unfulfilled ambitions and unresolved, unremittent conflicts. Instead of becoming more masculine by doing a man's job, they became more aware than ever before that their distinction lay in their being women, and in being needed as women. In the camps here and especially overseas, the password was "femininity," and the ideal was the continuation of two virtues of modern woman—good sportsmanship and femininity. Thus, many women exchanged lonesomeness for sexual excitement even if the relationship was only of short duration. If women in the Service took refuge in sexual freedom as did the soldiers, who was blamed? Only the women. The men forgot, or only rarely realized, that the women's motivations were the same as theirs. They, like the men, sought compensation for loneliness and for loss of individuality in the reassurance offered by sexuality. Those men who felt a conflict about their sexual experiences resented the service woman because she disturbed his necessary fantasy of the idealized woman back home; they blamed her and accused her since "she did not need to be there." There were also many women who resisted escape through this avenue. Their conscience, their idealization of "great love," their fear of sexuality, drove them in the direction of greater achievement in work. If their

ambitions were satisfied, the tangible reward of their services sustained their personality; if they were thwarted in that, they probably succumbed to a neurosis.

Whatever escape they chose, it was as if WACS and WAVES were intruding upon the privacy of the soldier's manhood, and the soldiers were often most scornful of them. But once overseas the men usually changed their attitudes when they saw women willing "to pay the price," willing to share the dangers and hardships of life close to combat zones. And they were there, awaiting the men as they returned from a campaign, to listen to their stories, to their discontents. Thus they grew in the men's estimation as the sharer of his fate, as a real comrade in arms.

Interestingly, the men had, from the very beginning, not such a scornful and critical attitude towards nurses and Red Cross workers. The nurses were in the Army, too, but they were not like soldiers, since nursing is an accepted avocation of women. A nurse represents the symbol of the solace and comfort that the soldier received from his mother. No wonder that he sees in her the source of all gratification and easily falls in love with her.

The Red Cross workers are not actually in the Army. They, like other social workers, function with the Army; they represent the connecting link between home and Army and they fill this role emotionally too. There were relatively few of them overseas, but they often came close enough to the fighting fronts to give coffee and doughnuts after battles, to write a letter or to mail one, to do a special favor, or just to listen. They catered to the soldier's dependent needs even if he was not sick or wounded. They represented home; probably many of them filled the place of a sister in the fantasy of the soldier and were rewarded with chivalrous gratefulness every time a soldier realized that "many things belong to winning a war." As we have already mentioned, the WACS and WAVES overseas often functioned for the soldier in the same capacity as the Red Cross workers. Besides their prescribed duties, they added a feminine touch to the boring routine of many scattered installations. Despite the respect which they so earned, there still was recognizable a difference in the basic attitude of the soldiers toward them—which

originated in the resentment toward the woman who was in the Army, who took away some jobs, and who came to compete.



In many ways the life in the Service was a real and maturing experience for the women. The efficient training and the organized routine developed the ego. Living in barracks had some similarity to boarding-school. Women learned to live in close quarters, listened to each other's troubles, and counted on each other's friendship and helpfulness. In the dormitories there was a girlish atmosphere, probably much in contrast to the masculinization which one expected to develop in the Service. It appears to us that the opposite happened. While on duty the WAC or WAVE kept up a soldier's front; actually she remained civilian, and even more, she matured in her femininity. For the woman in the Army, even more so than for the men, Service became a job to do, usually one much simpler and less dangerous than she originally fantasied. Yet when overseas, she often experienced dangers and not merely as an onlooker. Although the Army kept the women out of the real fighting, there are no devices against climatic conditions, against the sand in Africa, against the desolation and poverty in Italy. There is no possibility of having modern conveniences in war areas, and bathing from helmets or sleeping under mosquito nets is no mere sport. Thus, even though usually away from the actual shooting, these women overseas got a taste of soldiering. Susie McPherson, a Red Cross worker, wrote home after the Italian campaign: "The thing about life in the war zone which is almost impossible to communicate is not the spectacular aspect—that is really the least of it—but it is the everydayness, the imperceptibly accumulating fatigue and boredom and everlasting homesickness. What you eat, the sameness of it; what identical filthy stone villages you drive through, most of them partially or wholly smashed. The background you don't notice anymore, but it is always there."² Many men wrote home in similar vein, more or less artistically and articulately. Those women in Service who shared

² Eleanor Stevenson and Pete Martin: *I Knew Your Soldier*, Infantry Journal Publishers, Penguin Books, 1945.

such experiences with men developed another and different basis for understanding them. They learned to know the strange mixture of emotions which characterizes the soldier: his desire to be dependent in his lonesomeness and also his self-assurance and masculinity which grew through the resourcefulness and responsibilities of fighting in war. Through such understanding of the men, the women lost some of their demanding competitiveness and became more giving and more motherly.

This maturation will be helpful when the service woman returns. The same Red Cross worker whom we quoted above, wrote home before she was to return on leave: "Frankly, I am nervous about going home. Various people who have gone home for thirty days have come back with a kind of relief." Women as well as men found it hard to adjust to the atmosphere of civilian America while the war was still going on.

What can the service woman expect now when the war is over and she comes home as a veteran? According to the law, she has the same rights as the man; the G. I. Bill covers her too. Yet sociologically and emotionally she faces specific problems different from those of the service men.

There were few opportunities for the enlisted woman to become a hero, to show to her social group that she did an important job. Her community has a short memory and is inclined to forget that she enlisted because she was needed. Vera Brittain, in her autobiographical novel "Testament of Youth,"⁸ describes the responses and post-war development of a sensitive girl of a good English family who participated in the first World War; she was a nurse in the British Army and served in France. "Survivors not wanted" was the bitter summary of her immediate post-war experience. She went to Oxford where deans and advisors handled her with a cool distance, expressing a fear that she would "want something," that she would count on special privileges because of her service, and she was made to understand that she had best not try. It does not seem at present that the returning women veterans have to be cautioned not to ask

⁸ Vera Brittain: *Testament of Youth*, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1938.

for too much. They are all too well prepared for that. Whether consciously aware or unconsciously afraid of those problems which we have already discussed, they know that their equality with men may be a protection, but it will not be a privilege or even a comfort—probably the opposite.

Although her family is glad to have her back “in normalcy,” they are apt to put all the responsibility for estrangement, for the difficulties in readjustment upon her since she broke away from them on her own volition. If she now does not fit into the family life as she did before, she has to bear the blame since she became “too fancy.” It is easier for everyone if she comes back married. Since everything else would count as a failure, only marriage makes the woman free from the scorn of the family. Those who did not succeed in achieving marriage will take advantage of the educational and other provisions of the G. I. Bill of Rights, thus securing for themselves some form of independence from the family. This course of events is within the frame of normal development of the woman of today; and it does not necessarily indicate a neurotic masculinization. If such occurs, as it may in some cases, it will be a reaction to the conflicts within the home rather than the effect of life in barracks and of the proximity of Army camps.



There was relatively little written about the *war neurosis of women*. One generally assumed that their neuroses were not *operational fatigue*; they were actually rarely diagnosed as *traumatic neurosis*. The war neurosis of women was, in a much greater degree than the war neurosis of men, the result of the exacerbation of conflicts existing before, and stirred up by strenuous and contradictory conditions.

On the basis of our previous discussions, one can easily recognize the dynamic conflicts which may activate neurotic reactions in women in the Service. They have to suppress their dependent needs for the sake of their ambition to succeed as soldiers. These tendencies, the passive dependent desires and the ego ambitions, are in themselves conflicting. Yet if either the one or the other is satisfied, the emotional balance may hold out well. Neurotic

breakdowns may be expected if the women are frustrated in both directions.

As we know, all frustrations increase the desire for love. Lonesomeness, depression and the fear of danger increase the need for being loved. Women in the Army usually satisfied this need by the illusion of being in love, by "falling in love." One hears from women, as well as from men, that they married someone at whom she (or he) "would not have looked twice," had she (or he) been a civilian. Yet such love has a complex function in the emotional balance. To be wanted and desired is the remedy for present lonesomeness and for the emotional deprivation of the past. The illusion that one was in love justified sexual gratification and also permitted a dependence which protected the girl from further dangers of her sexuality. Love is such an integrating part of the functioning ego of women that, if it is disappointed, the functioning capacity of the ego is seriously disturbed. Thus, in the Auxiliary Services as in civilian life, women's neuroses often broke out after they were disappointed in love.

Many girls, afraid of the consequences of such disappointment, tried another way. They suppressed the prohibitions of their moral code; they suppressed their fear, even their need for love, and made themselves believe that their sexuality functioned like man's, that they could afford to live in their freedom as men do. The conflicts between the suppressed conscience and an unsatisfactory, degrading reality often resulted in neurotic breakdowns while in the Service. Even if such conflicts could be held in check while away from home, they threaten the emotional balance of the woman when she has to readjust to civilian life. Returning home mobilizes her original moral code; this makes her feel guilty and sensitive toward her environment. Different personalities deal with their guilt feelings differently. If the ego is weak, the individual will want to give up the struggle, will withdraw and become depressed. The individual with a stronger ego will fight against the guilt feeling by denying it; this results in hypomanic moods or in stubborn almost paranoiacally sensitive reactions to the environment.

Therefore it is to be expected that women, even more often

than men, facing the problems of readjustment within their families, may develop the neurosis which they escaped while in the Service, away from home. It is at the moment of return that the natural feminine dependency which was given so little outlet in the Army comes to the fore again and makes demands upon the family. And the family which could not tolerate this well before the girl enlisted, usually shrinks away from it after she returns. Whatever the original conflict was before, after the girl left for the Services, her family hoped that she would "grow up," that she would be a success. And when she returns, frankly or hiddenly this is the question: "Is she a success?" This is asked at home and by her friends. The returning service woman, sensing all this, cannot count upon gratification of her dependent needs. She has to meet the suspicion and scorn of her community; she has to deal with the resentment of men who mistrust her femininity and who accuse her—rightly or wrongly—of promiscuity. Some men, after they return home, will be ready to punish the women for not withdrawing and withholding, for descending from the pedestal, thus destroying in men the suspense which is needed for idealization, for love.

The service woman, the "forgotten soldier" of this war, took much upon herself. She challenged—although unwillingly—men and women alike. Thus she involuntarily took the role which the feminists played in the early decades of this century. However, the working woman of today, in the Army or outside, is different from the suffragette. She is much less willing to sacrifice her individual happiness as a woman than were the feminists. Afraid of the hostility, she becomes a doubting, reluctant avant-garde of a struggle between the sexes which seems to reach threatening dimensions in our already discordant society.

Chapter 20

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE SEXES

The post-war reconversion is the uppermost problem of the country. The fear of economic insecurity took hold of civilians and veterans alike. Without study of the laws of psychodynamics, they all seem to know—almost by instinct—what role work and success play in the solution of the problems of adaptation to civilian life. They all are afraid that unemployment would be not only a financial, but also an emotional disaster, since it might break the spirit of the veteran. It would disappoint him in his country, in his home, in the worthwhileness of victory. Sociologists and economists are aware of this problem, and psychiatrists do not minimize its importance. All look for help and for means to avoid such catastrophe. And in searching for solutions they try to find the reasons—or the scapegoats—for the threatening situation and this turns the attention to women.

Some sociologists assume that this second World War climaxes and consolidates the gains which were attained in the first World War and since then for women. They believe that after this war, women will really have the psychological advantage for a "battle for supremacy," and that women, being fully aware of this, are prepared to initiate the battle themselves. Willard Waller, for example, in his article on "The Coming War on Women,"¹ describes the strategic position of women, and he states that women may try to keep their jobs by refusing to bear children, by thwarting men in their role as provider and father, and thus may try to compete for jobs, using the weapons afforded them by their sex. It seemed to him—and also to many others—that there could be only one solution: namely, to restore

¹ Willard Waller. "The Coming War on Women," *The Chicago Daily News*, February 17, 1945.

the patriarchal family, to reinstate the men's supremacy by withdrawing the women from economic competition.

Our observations of the psychological scene lead us to believe that women are far away from a desire for such a "battle for supremacy"—that even if some women individually do want to achieve masculine prerogatives, women en masse do not. We saw them bearing children while their husbands were in war, and we see them gladly accepting pregnancy and motherhood after the men returned from war. We hear it from the young girls, who say that they go to school because they have to and that they prepare for some sort of work only "in case" they do not marry; and we observed that women of all ages are afraid of nothing as much as of the emotional passivity and the economic insecurity of men. We have shown in the examples of the adolescents and also of the service women and others, that the young woman nowadays does everything that she possibly can to build up the man, to give in to him, to make him the master, or to make him believe that he is the master. For women, more than ever before, are aware of their own emotional needs. They try, as far as conscious attempts may help them, to feel secure and safe, protected and happy in marriage. Yet women cannot reestablish, they cannot bring back the patriarchal family. It is not in women's hands to turn the clock backward. The dynamics of civilization put her on the scene as an almost equal competitor of man and she cannot free herself from this by her own volition.

The reasons for this are not in the field of economics alone. It is true that women have learned to mistrust our economic order, and that they feel uncertain about their husband's ability to provide for the family adequately. It is also admitted that "adequate" now means more and better than in the past, that gratification has become a relative term since living standards have improved largely through the efforts of women's work. Women who have earned the money to cover their needs and luxuries demand more than women used to, when they had to ask for them. Financial independence of women, however, means more than merely an access to material possessions. It is a manifestation of personal freedom; it is a sign of adulthood to be able to spend money for one's needs without the permission

which indicates dependence. The way in which money is spent is one of the most emotionally charged problems between husbands and wives. The lack of the freedom to buy what the woman wanted, especially for the purpose of improving her appearance, was to a great degree responsible for many women's wage earning. Yet, all this is not what really interferes with the establishment of a family in which the woman could, in repose, make herself dependent on her husband alone. It is the fear of emotional frustration which keeps her from this solution; and this does not refer to dissatisfaction with material things alone. The exaggerated importance of material satisfaction and even the clamoring for independence within the marriage are just secondary reactions to her mistrust and doubt of the power of love in marriage.



Variations in social behavior are not clear-cut; the lines between past and passing mores and what will be acceptable tomorrow cannot be easily discerned. Generations live together, and the preceding one exerts its influence long after its real authority has vanished. Still living is the generation which was already too old to change its puritanically influenced concepts during and after the first World War. They shake their heads over the flightiness and irresponsibility of the younger generations; their moralistic attitude is today enmeshed with the fear of those who grew up during the "twenties" and were affected by the democratic humanistic pressure of the first post-war period. This taught them a tolerance for individual freedom, and with this tolerance they wonder where this freedom will lead. They watch helplessly the young generation growing up during this war, influenced by conflicting values and characterized by a mixture of fear and impatience.

The newspapers reflect the tempo and direction of changes in sexual behavior. They report single incidents, but the sequence of those incidents, the headlines attached to them, and the editorial comments accompanying them reveal trends which cause concern.

We described the effect of war upon the adolescent girl, and

we may now understand that her confusion and fear are caused by the difficulties of being burdened by a double career. She no longer has the choice between work and marriage. she has the freedom of access to both, and therefore the obligation to succeed in both. While she is working in a career which she feels compelled to undertake, she is uncertain about her future as a woman—yet it is on this future that she would like to concentrate her hopes and expectations. This ambiguity of her double task will not leave her when she finishes school, nor even when she has reached a degree of independence through work. In discussing the emotional problems of the women in the Services, we showed that their work was subordinate to their hopes and ambitions for marriage. And they were not the only ones. The women who remained home and did their share in work were also willing to temporize with their opportunities for the sake of marriage, which in itself will not solve this conflict either, for marriage has changed and in our times it does not necessarily mean permanency. Thus, while the woman struggles for stability in herself—and frankly or hiddenly asks for the help of man—nothing is farther away from the thoughts of the normal woman of today than to appear neglectful of her femininity and unwilling to please the man. So she submits in a manner different from that of her grandmother to the man by whom she wants to be loved, upon whom she would like to rely and depend.

But what about the men whom the women of today expect to marry? What did the war do to the man's ability to love?



The ability to love—mature, heterosexual love—is an expression of strength; the desire to be loved is the emotion of the weaker one. The man conquers to love; the woman surrenders to be loved. Although man and woman alike have both desires—to love and to be loved—the distribution of the active and passive tendencies is normally such that the adult man is the active and less dependent and the woman is the passive and more dependent partner. Whatever the conscious strivings and the manifest behavior may be, this basic psychosexual constellation remains the aspiration of both sexes, and each individual desires

its fulfilment. Yet our culture created a superstructure which not only disguised those tendencies but made their gratification increasingly difficult. The war made it worse.

War-time separation mobilized the man's fear and his need to be dependent; through this relative regression, he became the weaker and woman—at least for a time—the emotionally stronger one. From this initial change of the interpersonal balance, the man's attitude toward his wife, or toward love generally, underwent a quite typical process during his Army life. In the first period, as we have repeatedly described, he was dependent on his wife, family and home. This dependence enriched his fantasy and he idealized his wife. No wonder that as long as his ego-strength supplied such fantasies, his wife or his sweetheart had no reason for jealousy; he was the "have-not" and she was the "have." How fortunate were the men and women whose fate permitted them to be together and to renew through real gratification the value of their relationship. For fantasy has to be regulated by experience or it will grow wild and exhaust itself. Suspense is a necessary prerequisite for love; however, suspense has to be released, otherwise it grows into frustration or it fades away, leaving the soldier with a sense of emptiness, unrelated to his past. This was the emotional situation of the soldier during the time of hardships and deprivations; then he felt emotionally impoverished. Unable to span the distance in his fantasy, he had to satisfy himself with such small gratifications as he could achieve within his immediate environment. He gambled and drank, he played cards, but he did not *love*. In accordance with the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, we would describe this state as one in which the ungratified longing finally results in a feeling of inferiority in relationship to the love-object. This may cause a depressed emotional state in some men, and in others a general restlessness which impels them to look for sexual outlet.

The discharge of the pent-up glandular sexuality brings about a release of the general tension and thus it satisfies for a short while. However, such momentary relief does not cure the sense of lonesomeness, the longing for the beloved person, and very rarely elevates the individual above his inferiority feeling.

Very often the opposite happens; such substitute gratification may activate guilty feeling and disgust. This often makes the man—especially very young men—feel unworthy of love. Thus a sense of self-degradation may develop merely from the emotional deprivation. This may become even more painful in combat zones under the strains and stresses of battle. As long as the danger of battle keeps all senses keyed to high pitch for the purpose of survival, sexual desire is pushed into the background—it appears as not existing. However, when the danger is overcome, the surplus excitation and overstimulation remains in the organism and the general nervous tension may seek release in sexual discharge. We may assume that this is the physiology of the pathologically violent sexual attacks committed by soldiers, and it may account for the fraternization which occurred so soon after the troops entered enemy territories.

The need for physiological discharge is one motive which incites the soldier to respond quickly to women, but not the only one. The need to be loved is just as urgent. Deprivation and strain, the fear of killing and of being killed develop the *combat personality* which, as long as the condition is not overcome, represents a regression, a degradation of the personality. Against this humiliating experience, love is the best, or the only remedy. Even the memory of love may help. The soldier—and the American soldier even more—who in awareness of his individualism is anxious to restore his emotional balance and his personal dignity, looks out for love. He notices the hungry dogs and feeds them to feel his attachment to living creatures. He will detect in every child, even in one who looks at him with greed and hostility, a willingness toward him. He will watch for the bitterness and pain of the old woman and he becomes almost eager to help her, as if he wanted to receive her gratefulness as a token of love, as a substitute for his mother's satisfaction and praise.

The battle spent the reservoir of hatred in many men, especially if it ended in victory and eliminated fear. Hatred and fear dissipated, the next emotion which overcame our soldiers in enemy territory was lonesomeness and the sense of guilt about the destruction. It is very hard to bear the feeling that one is

hated and nobody, not even the most callous man, can stand it for long. Hence, the soldier's inclination to find out and to interpret the defeated enemy's feelings toward him.

It is not long before he recognizes the young women, too, and senses their curiosity and demands on him. He proved himself in battle equal and superior to the enemy; but that was not he as an individual—that was all the Army and his equipment and everything that America is and stands for. After the battle was over and he was left as an individual to himself, he felt insecure and unloved. "Will this woman accept me as the better man?" he asked himself—and he tried to find the answer. He may even ponder over why the "yes" of the first girl was so important to him. It was not so much the individual but the function of the relationship which lifted his inferiority feeling and reassured his sense of masculinity. Probably only the younger, the inexperienced men will mistake that function of love for love itself, for the relationship through which not only oneself but the other person, or the other person even more than oneself, becomes important.

The emotional state of the combat personality, even after the battle is over, is not conducive to the development of lasting love. He seeks momentary satisfaction for his physical needs and immediate reassurance of his emotional need. Usually he has no time for waiting and he will permit himself only the crudest selection. Thus the woman becomes an instrument of his needs. This is not an experience of this war alone. Soldiers of every war came back with a more or less long series of such "substitute experiences" in the field of sexuality, which caused a temporary derision of women and of love.

Changes in sexual mores went hand in hand with revolutions and wars, and this was not the result of promises and programs. It was the effect of sudden changes in the social structure which uprooted large masses of population and caused insecurity and deprivation. Fear activates the instinct of survival and drives men and women to each other without regard for restrictions and social code. The sexual liberty which prevails after wars is a regressive process. In this war, which more than any before extended its effects upon large masses of population over every

country of the globe, the fear appears justified that in its wake the depreciation of women will be a general phenomenon, and will affect the relationship between the sexes deeply, threatening to undermine the foundation of the family.



We may remember that at the beginning of the war, when the nation was being geared for the great effort, one seemed to forget about the nature of sexuality. Sexuality then appeared to be almost of negligible importance, controllable by good will and by the all-pervading demands of war. In this emotional atmosphere, we stimulated the girls to comfort and amuse the boys, to write letters to soldiers, to reassure them of our attention, care and gratefulness. During the mobilization of men and material, while families adjusted emotionally and economically to separation and the soldiers to the Army life, there was little talk about sexual transgressions. Men and women separated by global distances sent their longing and idealized devotion to each other. They were certain of their willingness to wait for each other "until the end of time." At that period, women were worried about their husband's safety but they did not need to worry about their fidelity. Women, as if they had keen insight into the emotional dynamics of love, showed little jealousy and appeared to be generous to their husbands. As if they knew that the deprived, emotionally exhausted soldier, living from battle to battle, could not afford the luxury of love, they felt quite superior to the sexual transgressions of their husbands. Their lonesomeness and this sense of superiority, however, began to show effects on the women. They too suffered from frustration, waiting was harder than they originally thought. All this slowly began to activate the slumbering desire for reversing the "double standard." About the third winter of the war, women's infidelity became the topic of news. For a time it seemed as if women would destroy what they coveted the most, the security of marriage, and that many of them would forget their duties toward their children.

When the war was over, the picture changed again. Although many women were seriously worried about the conflicts

inherent in the readjustment with their returning husbands, now they pondered not only about their own but also about their husbands' behavior. Jealousy of the women toward the men who returned from England and France became common, and jealousy increased even more toward those who had not yet returned. No longer could one talk about the soldier overseas as a deprived individual. Many articles publicized the good times American soldiers were having in European countries. The soldier was not insecure any more. His self-assurance was restored quickly and was enhanced by the reflection of the power and glory of the Army of which he was a part. The newspapers registered the shift of emphasis in the relationship of the sexes. The men, intrigued by the unquestioned superiority actually attributed to their status, sought not only passing pleasure. The European woman's seeming helplessness and admiration appealed to the American soldier as something new. Thus they "fell in love" with the woman, or believed that they loved the woman who reassured them about their masculinity so easily. Thus the American women had reasons to worry. Women of other countries all over the globe became competitors. Even though this applies mainly to the Armies of occupation, it has a bearing on the emotional balance between the sexes.

Indeed this balance must be a delicate one. We expressed our concern regarding the man's passivity and dependence and stated that it is unsatisfactory for both man and woman alike; that woman's superiority, even if it is expressed by unbegrudging motherliness alone, would finally undermine man's virility and therefore is undesirable for both. And now we appear even more concerned as we observe the man's emancipation from the controls of home, his liberation from his often-mentioned dependence. Is this degradation of sexuality and women the effect of war-time circumstances, or are there other factors which may account for it?

The study of the psychological principles regulating the relationship between the sexes reveals that man's evaluation of woman never has been the product of his mind alone. Changes in emotional values go through the long process of self-evaluation, and this is not altogether a pleasant procedure even

if it is achieved through the agreeable way of liberty for immediate gratification.

During the war, men and women, under the pressure of their various needs, gave in to temptation easily. After the war, they have to justify themselves. The soldier, too, has to account to his own conscience and to its representative in the reality, to the woman to whom he comes back. We reviewed some of the conflicts he may face within his family, and we may add here that *man's fear of woman, of the idealized woman at home, plays an important role in the quick-fire spread of depreciation of women.* This is, of course, a paradox, but knowing how psychological self-defense works, it is understandable.

Many signs indicate that man's behavior at present grows to be the reverse of what once was the rebellion of women against men. Now men rebel against the domination of women and against their position within the family. He strikes against his early marriage, which was an escape from his mother's domination into a household managed by his wife. Now, after having lived away from her, he suddenly feels little inclination to return home to adulate her and to submit to her. The more sincere his guilty feelings are, the more intently he may seek for rationalizations. Some of them may be valid, others are only artifact weapons with which to reproach and punish his wife. Many of the soldiers try to clarify their relationships to their wives and attempt to solve their problems in letters to her, to friends, or even with the help of psychiatrists. Some of these men may remind us of Ibsen's Nora in "The Doll's House," only with the sex reversed. A man in his early thirties, father of three children, fell in love with a young WAVE while he served in the Navy. The relationship itself became meaningless after a long interruption. Yet it represented to him the road to freedom. Thus the prospect of being discharged became a threat; he was worried and afraid of returning home. He wrote to his wife that in spite of his appreciation and esteem of her, in spite of his devotion to the children, he would like to be free; he did not want to stay married.

The woman at home is the measure of the masculinity and emotional maturation of the man. To his wife he owes emo-

tional allegiance, toward her he may feel guilty for his sexual estrangement. His wife has the right to his love, to his strength, and to his security; before her he will hide his inferiority feelings and his fears. Men may rebel against such a relationship or may accept it as an impetus, in the period of readjustment, this function of the woman as conscience will play an important role. It will not be pleasant for the woman either, although it is not new for her. The role of the woman which so characteristically colors the American family and society represents the continuation of a superiority which originated in her biological task—motherhood—and thus once was experienced by every individual. This superiority seems now to become a source of conflict which turns the vicious circle of the “battle of the sexes” against the woman again.

When she felt most secure in her role—the puritan strong mother of the patriarchal family—she did rely upon her husband as a strong man who was the provider and supplied her with home, social status, security and all that this implies. For this the wife owed her husband unquestioned allegiance and lasting homage. The marriage—although not in the same way and not in the same respects—afforded emotional security for both, for husband and wife. The economic waves of the industrial civilization and two world wars pushed the women out of the security of such family life into open competition with men, and in its wake, it disturbed the mutual reliance of man and woman upon each other. It undermined the belief that in the marriage the woman will attain the protection of a strong husband and the man will gain the admiration of a devoted wife. At present, women, even if desirous of restoring man’s belief in his superiority, cannot do a very good job of it, since in the process of emancipation the interpersonal relation between the sexes shifted; this in turn changed the marriages substantially.

In our present culture, marriages based on free choice can be kept together only by free will, since neither religion nor other social mores support them with enough vigor. Many young men and women would claim that instead of marriage as a “sacrament” we have free will and freedom to divorce. Thus many of

them regard marriage not as a permanent institution in the individual's life and an enduring basis of society; they rather frankly admit that they consider marriage as an expediency; as long as it is pleasant and profitable one can hold on to it and when it ceases to be so, there is always divorce. We may agree with the young men and women to some extent: marriage was always an expedient solution of the many conflicting trends in the relationship between the sexes and of such importance that its regulation was taken over by religion and by civil law. Divorce is a great achievement of our humanistic liberal society which seeks to redress errors and undo harm. However basic the right to divorce is in the individual's evolution to human dignity, it exposes the fact that marriages today present more problems than they did in the patriarchal family in which authority played a greater role than individual freedom. The husband of today resents the task of proving himself against other men, since marriage does not definitely settle his supremacy toward and his possession of his wife. His wife is free to earn her living and to take a chance for emotional happiness in another marriage; she does not need to rely upon her marriage as she did in the patriarchal puritanic society. This indicates that she has to be always ready to become independent. Thus even after she has married, the woman remains a prospective aspirant for jobs, for work—a competitor of men.

Since she is insecure, she has to cherish her freedom to work and has to continue as if she would really desire to succeed in the battle of the sexes. While the competition for jobs may be one of the tactical weapons of this battle and the general economy of the country may decide its grand strategy, the basic issues of this struggle will be decided, peculiarly, not in the open field of public life but individually within the marriage. And here it is shown that her equality did not make the woman emotionally more secure. Her emotional needs did change but little, and her happiness remained—since it is biologically determined—dependent upon the love of a stronger man and upon her motherhood. Yet, however basic her desire for the strong man may be, she cannot reestablish the patriarchal family voluntarily as a

“post-war measure” in order to relieve herself and the men of insecurity and apprehension. Neither the economic structure of our society, nor the already established developmental stage of the woman would permit it.

Emotional relationships can have depth only if they are sincere. Woman cannot lastingly create an illusion for the man and for herself about his strength and superiority if this is based on her fantasy alone. Thus she and her husband as well are afraid of disillusionment. The critical attitude of woman which causes her husband's rebellion against her makes her unhappy too, since it frustrates her. And this fear of being frustrated in her marriage remains her basic dilemma. To avoid such frustration, she is willing to compromise. Thus, woman's freedom to work is threatened not alone by frank competition of the men and by motherhood, which naturally limits her working capacity. More important than these is the man's resistance against her work, his unwillingness to accept it. It is not the man's conscious antagonism which threatens the woman most deeply, but her own awareness that while her work may satisfy her ego's ambition, at the same time it may lead to her emotional frustration. Thus the struggle goes on, not only in society and in the family, but within each individual, and the conflict between her various aspirations and obligations has to be decided in the everyday life.



Indeed the long process of liberation, fought for by women within the family and outside in the economic struggle, did not make life easier either for men or women. They are both burdened with responsibilities which have to be shared alike. We cannot be surprised by this. The equality of the sexes is the result of the democratic process which, in its evolution, demands more and more maturity from each individual for his own sake as well as that of the community.

Perhaps men and women, realizing that they have very little to envy and begrudge in each other's fate, will learn to use their hard-won liberation to comprehend that they need each other

with all their strength and all their weaknesses; that only in sharing these can they fulfil their individual happiness and at the same time be prepared for the super-individual task, to

“ . . . open to many millions space
Where they may live, not safe—secure but free
And active.”²

² Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Faust II*.

The end of the war came suddenly, leaving a prayerful shock in people's hearts. The victory, great, inevitable and decisive as it was, only gradually made its way into consciousness through the amazedness, solemnity and guilt-feelings precipitated by the atom bomb. During the days of spell-bound suspense, while waiting for word of the definite surrender of Japan, people had time to think, to feel and to analyze their reactions. Newspapers and psychologists, sociologists and commentators tried to grasp this mood and to convey its meaning. Many accounts depicted the joy of victory as dimmed, the exhilaration as overcast by a tension and sadness incomprehensible in the face of victory. Soon it was obvious that apprehension had taken hold of everyone, who began to comprehend that mankind had grasped the principles of creation and had become responsible for them. Indeed a responsibility for God's domain! Human beings felt humble, scientists prayed that the secret should have been withheld, that it should have been inherently impossible to place in the hands of man ultimate power, energy in its essence. Whether a believer in God, an agnostic or an atheist, whatever his knowledge of the powers of destructiveness and the dangers to life, he—all men—lived in the unperturbed security that the world, as he experienced it, would go on and that creation would continue as it had for millions of years. But not if man has the power to destroy it! The atom bomb not only finished the war and introduced a new era; it also shook mankind's security and mobilized fears which only faith, religion, and philosophy had attempted to soothe before. Thus the war to finish all wars ended, leaving fear in the hearts of men and mistrust in every nation.

A young sailor wrote home from the Pacific front, "People usually think that wars are a great cleansing; that purified through sacrifice, they can start from scratch along their ideal path after it is all over. Because of their innate wishfulness,

people inevitably forget that every event is interrelated and one cannot go outside of history and 'start over.' "

However much one tried to avoid slogans, however strictly one guarded one's self against illusions in order to be protected against disappointments—the great effort could not have been mustered had it not been for the belief that ultimate good was its goal. Thus, the farther away we were from victory, the more certain we felt that its goals—whether expressed vaguely or concretely—the more obvious it became that wars are not an end, that they do not reach "what we were fighting for." After victory is won, one has to realize that there is no escape from history, either for the victors or for the vanquished. The tower of flame rising over Nagasaki was the warning finger of creation, placing superhuman responsibility upon mankind.

The sudden ending of the war brought with it fears of immediate individual significance. For, even the change to the better, from war to peace, goes hand in hand with insecurity. During the whole war, people—at home as well as in the army—were haunted by the apprehension of economic instability connected with the reconversion of the economy of war to peace. Americans, soldiers and civilians alike, were confident of the power and of the indomitable will to "finish the job." At the same time they doubted the economy which created the power and integrated it against the external enemy. Only in a minority of the people were these doubts based on knowledge of economic principles, in the majority it came from a deeper source: from the instinctive knowledge of one's self and in the identification of the self with the nation. Thus, because each individual knows that he is more capable of doing his utmost for self-assertion and self-defense, and because he is aware that he would make a greater effort to reestablish his own security than to rebuild general peace and love, everyone assumed that once the nation reached its immediate goal by winning the war it would be unable and unwilling to continue the same intensity of effort. This was almost an instinctive fear, kept alive by the memory of the economic depression, that the post-war economy, as if tired of the integration, would take recourse in policies which

did not secure freedom from want. The fear of want, of financial insecurity and all that it implies, preyed on everyone's mind when the peace came, and the struggle for immediate security, while it overshadowed the confidence in the victory, it represented a great incentive toward assuming one's place in civilian life.



His job finished, the soldier was eager to return home to his established freedom of religion and of speech. He, and his family with him, were anxious that he shake off the regulations and mechanization of Army life and reassume the proven freedom of his individuality. He had given it up and had fought the war with a singleness of purpose—and rightly so—to survive and to return and to take his life in his own hands again. Collectively, in the nation's mind, there is no doubt about his rights and his merits. Yet individually he faces problems, doubts and hesitations. At his return he realizes that he cannot escape from his own personal history. Underneath the standardization of army life, his personality continued as it was, determined by his past and by those with whom he shared and lived, whom he loved and feared—and to whom he now came back. In the course of our investigations we illustrated his problems and also discussed the forces which—acting collectively—tend to change the structure of the family.

For better or for worse? Will the family, balanced on equal privileges and responsibilities between the marital partners, prove itself best ordained to fulfill its function? Will it be stable enough to afford the conditions which enable each of its members to pursue and attain the best integration of his individuality? Will children, reared with such individualistic ideals, gain and retain the capacity to adjust to the requirements of family-life in their own marriage? It is certain that the task of the family is much more complex if it is to fulfill the developmental goal of an individualistic society than it was in the patriarchal family, since the latter aimed to transmit, through simpler and well established patterns, a more homogeneous developmental goal. And this would hold true even if the family were to function in a stable world, in a society free from fear and

want. But today, stirred up by the insecurities of war, aware of the dangers which the future may hold, the family faces problems of increasing complexity. Its stability depends upon the security of each of its members, its happiness upon their mutual gratification; the family functions to counteract insecurity, to create security by love. Insecurity produces fear and fear bears hostility.



Life is continuous, but it is not a chain of repetitions. Every experience—be it positive, furthering growth and development or negative, crippling and inhibiting development—enters into action with the effects of past experiences; the future is the result of such interactions. Knowing the dynamic forces involved in this struggle one may predict some aspects of the future, and one may even influence it: one may further the good, the positive forces, and one may impede the destructive ones. This is what sociology and what politics intends to achieve for society, for nations. This is what psychiatry tries to do for the individual. The aim of this book is to serve this purpose.

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